

**RAILROAD CITY:**  
**FOUR HISTORIC NEIGHBORHOODS IN ALTOONA, PENNSYLVANIA**



America's Industrial Heritage Project  
National Park Service



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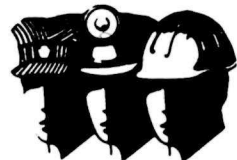
**Compiled by Kim E. Wallace**

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*Cover: 1418, 1416, 1414 2nd Ave., Fourth Ward, Altoona, Pennsylvania.*



The Altoona Neighborhoods Project was conducted by the Historic American Buildings Survey/Historic American Engineering Record (HABS/HAER), Robert J. Kapsch, chief, at the request of America's Industrial Heritage Project (AIHP), Randy Cooley, director. Both HABS/HAER and AIHP are agencies of the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior. AIHP was formed in 1986 to stimulate economic revitalization in nine southwestern Pennsylvania counties--Bedford, Blair, Cambria, Fayette, Fulton, Huntingdon, Indiana, Somerset, and Westmoreland--by promoting the region's industrial heritage (Fig. 1.2). HABS was formed in 1933 to record historic buildings through measured drawings and large-format photography. More recently, written histories have been incorporated into documentation efforts to complement the graphic record. HAER was formed in 1969 to record engineering and industrial structures. A team of HAER historians completed fieldwork in Altoona in summer 1987. Readers should refer to the HAER publication Blair County and Cambria County, Pennsylvania: An Inventory of Historic Engineering and Industrial Sites (1990) for coverage of Pennsylvania Railroad (PRR) and other industrial buildings in Altoona.

This publication is based on fieldwork conducted in Altoona by HABS Senior Historian Alison K. Hoagland during summer 1988 and by five HABS historians during summer 1989. It was compiled and edited by HABS historians Kim E. Wallace and Sara Amy Leach. Hoagland, project leader and editor, was author of **Chapter 4** and **Appendix B**. Kim E. Wallace (University of Pennsylvania), supervisory historian of the 1989 project, also served as editor and author of **Chapters 1, 2, and 7**. Nancy Spiegel (Yale University), wrote **Chapter 3** and the HABS Reports in **Appendix A**. Susan Garfinkel (University of Pennsylvania), was the author of **Chapter 5** and the majority of the chapter's building summaries; those written by Nancy Smith or Alison K. Hoagland are marked by the appropriate initials (ns. or kh.) under "Sources." Kathy Edwards (University of California, Berkeley), wrote **Chapter 6** including the building summaries. Nancy Smith (Pennsylvania State University), wrote building summaries for the schools and a number of other buildings in the Fourth Ward as well as a history of schools in Altoona, which was incorporated into Chapter 2. She was also responsible for creating and manipulating the computer databases of building information for the Fourth Ward and Llyswen (**Appendix C**) and of Fourth Ward tax-assessment information. Statistics from this work were incorporated in Chapters 5 and 6.

David Ames (Center for Historic Architecture and Engineering, University of Delaware) was responsible for large-format photographic documentation in Altoona. Unless otherwise noted, the **photographs** reproduced in the text and Appendix A are his work.

Two teams of HABS/HAER architects, supervised by John Burns, deputy chief and principal architect, were also based in Altoona during summer 1989. K. Edward Lay (University of Virginia) was the HABS team supervisor; team members included Douglas S. Anderson (North Dakota State University), Robert W. Anthony (Pennsylvania State University), Anette A. Jensen (Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts), and David A. Macharola (Pennsylvania State University). They completed a set of measured drawings of the Masonic Temple and the Charles B. Dudley House as well as floor plans of houses in Llyswen and the First and Fourth



wards. Most of these drawings are used to illustrate the text and Appendix A. The HAER team, supervised by George Steinrock, Jr., documented the East Broad Top Railroad at Orbisonia, Pa., and contributed floor plans of the PRR double house at 1121-23 8th Ave. Team members included Richard L. Koochagian (University of Tennessee), Christina R. Moon (University of Virginia), Elaine G. Pierce (Auburn University), Patricia D. Reese (Boston Architectural Center), and Paul J. Skeet (Essex County Council Planning Department, United Kingdom).

The authors of Railroad City would like to thank the staff of the Altoona Public Library and of the Blair County Historical Society's library at Baker Mansion; Timothy Boyle, librarian at the Altoona Mirror; Ted Holland, curator at the Altoona Railroaders' Memorial Museum; Jane Sheffield, Altoona Main Street Manager; Loretta Schmidt, AIHP historian, and the rest of the AIHP staff; reviewers David Ames, John Burns, Dean Herrin, Robert Emerson, and Louis and Anna Leopold; and the many Altoona residents who contributed their time, information, and interest to help make this report possible.

Other HABS/HAER publications produced for AIHP include: The Character of a Steel Mill City: Four Historic Neighborhoods of Johnstown, Pennsylvania (1989), A Legacy of Coal: The Coal Company Towns of Southwestern Pennsylvania (1989), Two Historic Pennsylvania Canal Towns: Alexandria and Saltsburg (1989). Concurrent to the issue of this book on the neighborhoods of Altoona, HABS/HAER released two surveys, Blair County and Cambria County, Pennsylvania: An Inventory of Historic Engineering and Industrial Sites and Fayette County, Pennsylvania: An Inventory of Historic Engineering and Industrial Sites, as well as The Company Towns of the Rockhill Iron and Coal Company: Robertsdale and Woodvale, Pennsylvania.



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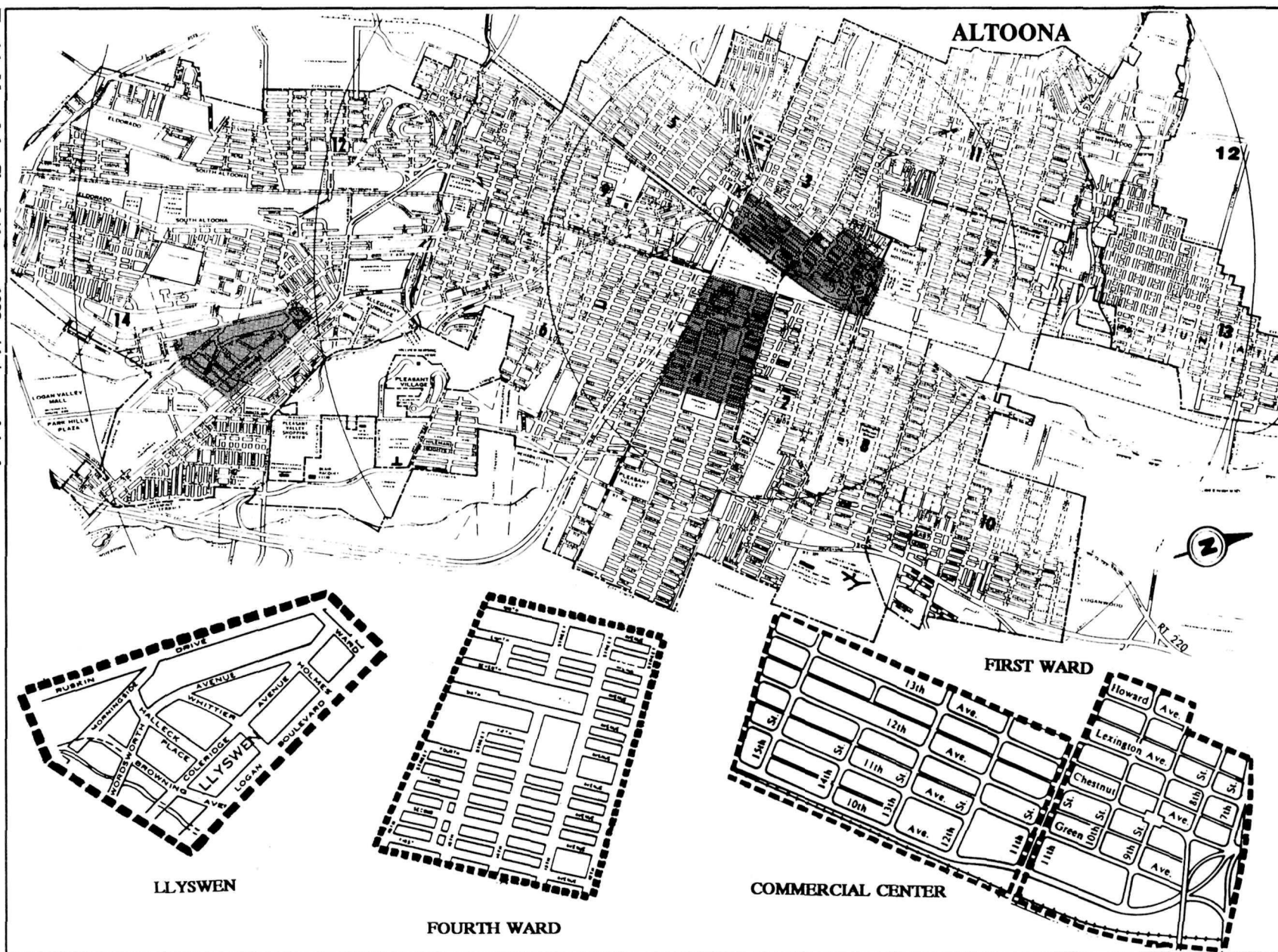
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**Fig. 1.1 Map of the City of Altona, 1983, with insets of the four survey areas**



## INTRODUCTION

"They Still Love Me In Altoona" is part of the title of George Burns' 1976 autobiography. The phrase refers to a heartening reception given his vaudeville act by the audience at an Altoona theater during the early years of the comedian's career. It was also an appropriate title choice because of the comedic sound of the word Altoona. The city was reputedly named in 1849 by J. Edgar Thomson, then chief engineer of the Pennsylvania Railroad (PRR). An assistant engineer later claimed he pointed out to Thomson that generally:

words, in the English language, containing the double "o," had some low signification, as "booby," "fool," "poltroon," "spooney," etc. ad in finitum whereas the reverse was as signally true of words wherein the single "o" gave the vowel sound, as "noble," "holy," "glory," "heroic," etc.

He therefore suggested "Altona" instead, but "Mr. Thompson was not the sort of man to change a plan at the suggestion of another, and 'Altoona' remains."<sup>1</sup> In part as a consequence of this unsophisticated sound, the name also served to represent provincial middle America and Burns' long appeal there.

Altoona would have proudly accepted the role of standing for quintessential middle America. In fact, city boosters have long tried to place it in that role, describing Altoona as a place "where there is neither the very rich nor the very poor." The city was founded in 1849 as the site of the PRR's main locomotive and car repair and building shops. By the end of the century, the shops were "the largest of their kind in the world."<sup>2</sup> They provided the basis for the good life in Altoona, and the size and reputation for excellence of both the shops and the PRR seemed to Altoonans to lend this life a world-class distinction and importance:

Altoona being a railway town, is a city where extreme moneyed aristocracy have found no resting place. The only prestige is that of skillful labor. No drones are allowed; the drill and discipline necessary for the production of such marvels of machinery, such powerful engines, such elegant cars as those made here forbid it. The country daily feels the influence and receives a benefit from these skilled artisans, who here enjoy their happy homes, possessing all of those elements necessary for the making and saving [of] money and enjoying life.<sup>3</sup>

Located in a wide valley on the eastern side of the Allegheny Mountains in central Pennsylvania, Altoona is called the "mountain city."<sup>4</sup> The city is bisected by the tracks and shops that stretch along the center of the valley, forming the central determinant feature of its

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<sup>1</sup>"How Altoona Was Named," The Altoona Tribune (January 27, 1876).

<sup>2</sup>Official Program: Old Home Week, Altoona and Blair County (August 13-19, 1922), 2. Charles B. Clark, Illustrated Altoona (Altoona, Pa.: Board of Trade, 1895), 128. J. Simpson Africa, History of Huntingdon and Blair Counties, Pennsylvania (Philadelphia: Louis H. Everts, 1883), 183.

<sup>3</sup>Africa, 146.

<sup>4</sup>Africa, 135.

landscape (Fig. 1.1). In the past, visitors commented on the contrast of the beautiful mountain setting and the city itself, made unattractive by the railroad's tracks, shops, and pollution.

The houses that are arranged in rows and steps up the hillsides are no longer gray and drab from coal soot, and residents no longer stream by the thousands down to the shops and back at shift change. The cheerful, clean colors of the houses' paint and siding are evidence of pronounced economic and social changes in Altoona just as their form and arrangement tell of the city's foundations and development.

The shift away from an industrial economy in which the railroad played a crucial role has been dramatic and has sparked an interest in the past and in finding alternative economic fuels. It is not surprising that the two should be combined in a promotion of history and preservation of its physical remains as a way to attract tourist and development dollars. This study is a part of that effort. It has been sponsored by America's Industrial Heritage Project (AIHP), an agency of the National Park Service, which focuses on preservation and planning in nine southwestern Pennsylvania counties (Fig. 1.2).

In spring 1988, the Historic American Buildings Survey/Historic American Engineering Record (HABS/HAER) surveyed a defined area of Intown Altoona for historic architectural resources. The purpose was to identify significant historic architecture for documentation and National Register nominations. The survey area was coterminous with that targeted for revitalization through preservation by an ad hoc committee applying to the state's Main Street Manager Program: 8th Avenue to 17th Street to 10th Avenue to 19th Street; the northwest

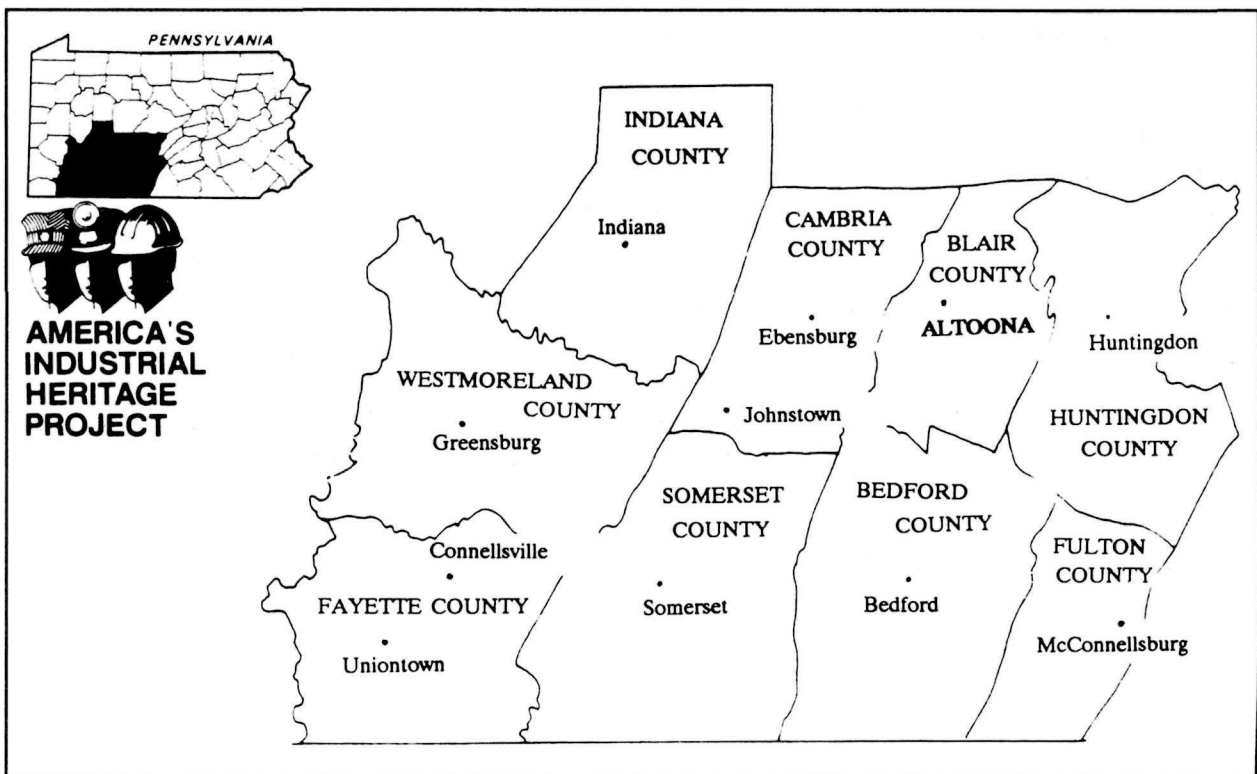


Fig. 1.2 Map of the nine-county region encompassed by America's Industrial Heritage Project.



side of 13th Avenue to 11th Street, to the northwest side of Howard Avenue to 9th Street, to Howard Avenue to 7th Street, and back to 8th Avenue. This project area was divided into five study units including the commercial center, the First Ward, Loudonsville, the East Side, and the PRR shops. HABS Senior Historian, Alison K. Hoagland, surveyed the area during summer 1988 and completed a draft report on the project in May 1989.

Based on this work, a more extensive survey--encompassing two additional neighborhoods--was planned for summer 1989. Five historians were assigned to different sections of the project. Kim Wallace researched and wrote an overview history of the city, incorporating the overview from Hoagland's report, to provide a context for the neighborhoods (**Chapter 2**). Nancy Spiegel also expanded on Hoagland's work in the commercial district by completing HABS reports on twenty buildings (**Appendix A**) and writing a new overview of the area (**Chapter 3**). Susan Garfinkel was responsible for a study of a section of the Fourth Ward bounded by 12th and 16th streets and 1st and 9th avenues. She was assisted by Nancy Smith who also computerized the 1878 and 1901 tax-assessment records for the Fourth Ward and wrote a history of Altoona schools. Kathy Edwards worked in the third project area, the core of the suburb of Llysven, bounded by Logan Boulevard, Ruskin Drive, Ward Avenue, and Mill Run.

The studies of Llysven and the Fourth Ward began with a survey to collect "baseline documentation" of all buildings within the established boundaries. Team members took a black-and-white 35mm photograph and filled out a basic information sheet for each building, recording its address, exterior materials, number of stories, roof shape, and apparent present use. Sanborn fire-insurance maps covering most of the survey areas provided approximate dates for the buildings, as well as their original use and structural material. This information was coded and entered it into a computer database--a listing appears in **Appendix C**.

After the initial survey was completed, approximately 10 percent of the residential buildings and all the institutional buildings for each neighborhood were studied in greater depth. The residential sample includes buildings representative of the project area's geographic range, of both multiple- and single-family residences, and the range of styles and size of houses. "Building summaries"--a brief description and a history based on research into deed and tax records, city directories, and other relevant sources--were then written for each building. Finally, neighborhood histories were compiled, based on this and more general research (**Chapters 5-6**). Building summaries are included at the end of these chapters. **Chapter 4**, covering the First Ward, was incorporated from Hoagland's 1989 report. The buildings surveyed during her 1988 study of the Commercial Center, First Ward, Loudonsville, and the East Side are listed in **Appendix B** with a small, 35mm photograph and a brief description.

The **index** that follows Appendix C includes architects and builders and buildings that were the subject of a building summary or HABS Report; Appendix C was not indexed.

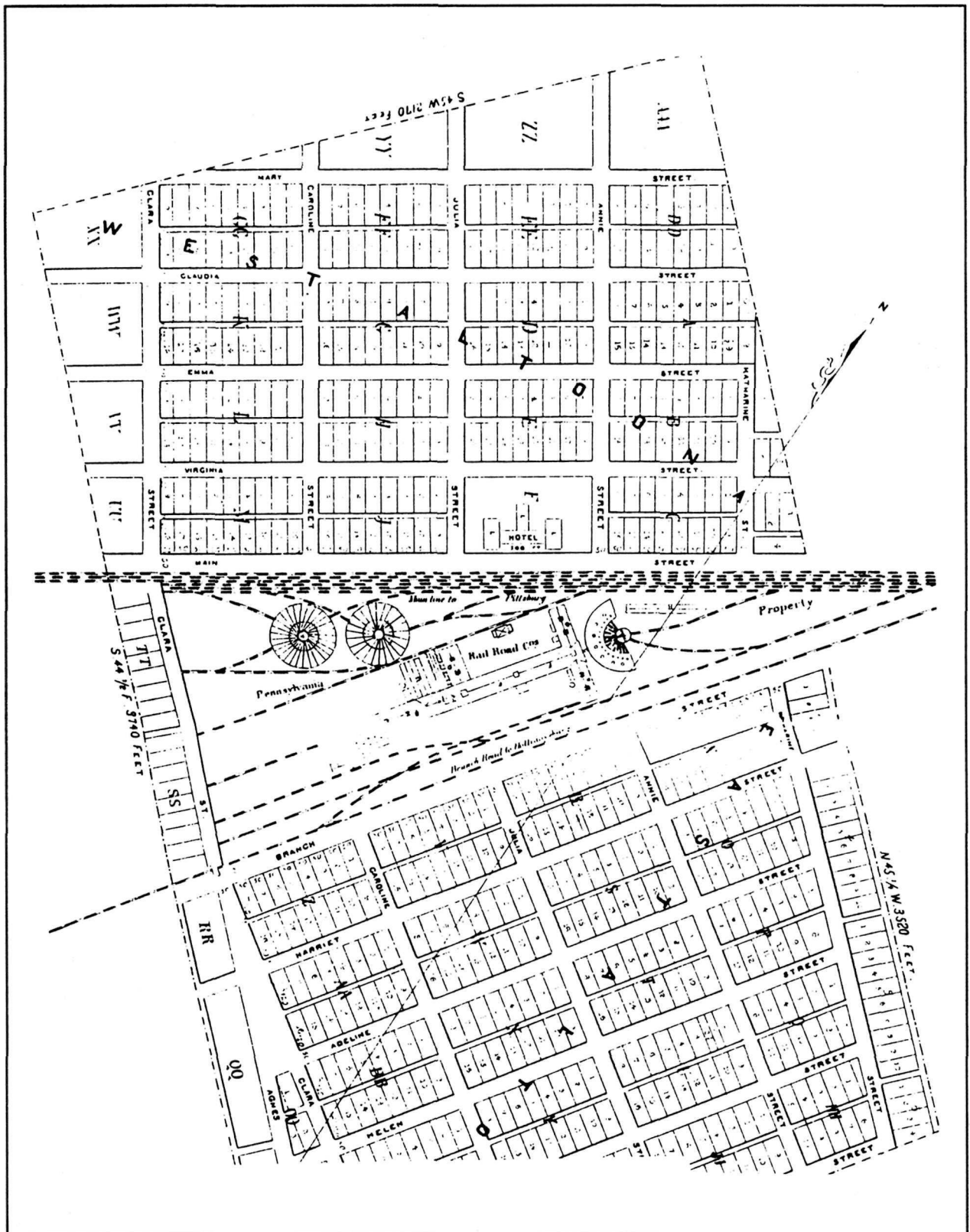


Fig. 21 "Altoona, Tuckahoe Valley, Blair County," c. 1855, showing the two halves of the town divided by the railroad yards. From Africa (1883).

## RAILROAD CITY

by Kim E. Wallace

*No one who lives in Altoona needs to be told that it is the railroad city. Altoona did not just happen; it did not grow up from a cross-roads village started by chance as did so many other American cities and towns. The railroad did not come to it; the railroad built it.<sup>1</sup>*

In 1849, the Logan Valley in Pennsylvania's Allegheny Mountains was primarily farm and woodlands. The Pennsylvania Main Line Canal crossed the valley's southern end where canal boats began their ascent of the Allegheny summit on the counter-balanced Portage Railroad cars. But a decision made by an association of investors meeting 237 miles away in Philadelphia brought dramatic changes to the quiet valley. On the recommendation of their newly appointed chief engineer, the board of directors of the Pennsylvania Railroad (PRR) decided to locate the line of a cross-state railroad through the Logan Valley and to use the Portage Railroad as a temporary connection across the Alleghenies. More important, it also decided to establish the company's main shop complex in the valley. This complex would accommodate the extra "helper" engines needed to get trains over the mountains and would provide maintenance and repair service from this central location for the entire line.

To support the large scale of the repair shops, the company needed workers and a place for them to live, so in 1849 its engineers laid out and named Altoona. The town plan consisted of two halves--one on either side of a thirty-five-acre plot containing the railroad tracks and shops (Fig. 2.1). Five years later, when a continuous PRR track was opened, Altoona had a population of about 2,000 and was incorporated as a borough. By 1870 the citizens numbered 10,618; by 1890, 30,337; and by 1920, 60,331 (Fig. 2.3). The population peaked in 1930 at 82,054. By this time the PRR shop complex had expanded north and south of its original site and covered seventy-five acres. Fifteen thousand Altoonans were PRR employees.<sup>2</sup> This transformation from "wilderness" to railroad city is the subject of this chapter.

### Establishment and Paternalism of the PRR

The Pennsylvania Assembly chartered the PRR in 1846 in response to lobbying by a group of Philadelphia merchants who in turn were motivated by threatened competition from Baltimore for access to western markets. The Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Company (B&O) received permission from the Pennsylvania Assembly in 1846 to build a line from Cumberland, Maryland, to Pittsburgh. In 1847, Philadelphia interests were successful in having the B&O charter revoked, and PRR stockholders elected their first president and board of directors. The

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<sup>1</sup>"Chief Industry of Railroad City," Altoona Tribune (January 15, 1916), sec. 5, 1.

<sup>2</sup>Altoona Centennial Booklet: Noteworthy Personages and Historical Events, 1849-1949. (Altoona, 1949). J. Simpson Africa, History of Huntingdon and Blair Counties, Pennsylvania (Philadelphia: Louis H. Everts, 1883), 135. Charles B. Clark, Illustrated Altoona (Altoona, 1896), 12-3. George A. Wolf, ed., Blair County's First Hundred Years: 1846-1946 (Altoona: The Mirror Press, 1945). J. Elfreth Watkins, History of the Pennsylvania Railroad Company, 1846-96 (Philadelphia: Pennsylvania Railroad Co., 1896), 3:7. John Paige, A Special History Study: Pennsylvania Railroad Shops and Works, Altoona, Pennsylvania (National Park Service, May 1989), 1-2. U.S. Census.

PRR's chief engineer, J. Edgar Thomson, was instructed to survey the best route from Harrisburg to Pittsburgh, and by 1852 there was an all-Pennsylvania rail route from Philadelphia to Pittsburgh. In 1854 construction of the Horseshoe Curve, a skillfully engineered length of track bypassing the old Portage Railroad to the Allegheny summit, was completed, and the next stage of construction, "double-tracking" the line to accommodate traffic flow, was begun.<sup>3</sup>

The ambitions of PRR sponsors and directors were not satisfied with access to the western Pennsylvania border. Just after the Civil War, PRR President Thomson embarked on an expansion program. Between 1869-74 the system grew from 491 miles of track to almost 6,000 miles. When the PRR line reached Chicago in 1869, it represented an investment of more than \$400 million at a time when very few industries had assets exceeding \$1 million. Its organization and management strategies became a model for later large-scale corporations.<sup>4</sup>

The PRR was able to expand its lines so quickly by leasing and purchasing 51 percent interests in local lines across the country, and by concentrating capital investments in directly road-related expenses.<sup>5</sup> For local communities along the road, these policies and the fact that

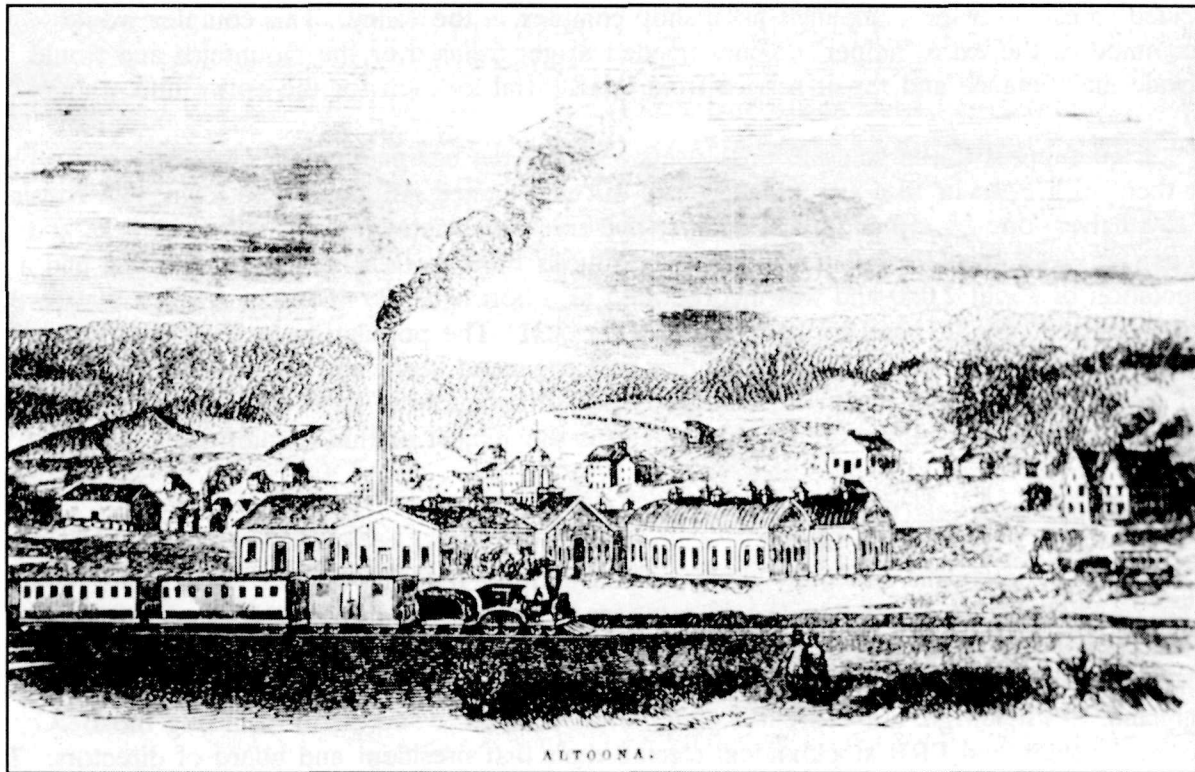


Fig. 2.2 View of Altoona from Bowen, 1852.

<sup>3</sup>Paige, 3-4. Wolf, 368-71.

<sup>4</sup>Alfred D. Chandler, The Visible Hand: The Managerial Revolution in American Business (Cambridge: Belnap Press of Harvard University, 1977), 151, 154.

<sup>5</sup>William B. Sipes, The Pennsylvania Railroad: Its Origin, Construction, Condition, and Connections (Philadelphia: The Passenger Department, 1875).



the PRR's energies as a corporation were dispersed along its lines meant that they did not experience the direct company paternalism common in nineteenth-century single-industry towns. Instead, there was an undeniable dependence on and awareness of the pervasive railroad presence in the community, and a kind of distanced--almost disinterested--paternalism with occasional direct and benevolent instances of railroad sponsorship in the community.

## Altoona and John Wright

The PRR built Altoona in the sense that without the railroad company there would have been no city, but it did not literally build the city by supplying a company store and houses as did most companies that needed to create a community and labor supply from scratch. Development of the city itself seems to have been left primarily to informed free enterprise. Shortly after the decision was made to locate car repair shops in the Logan Valley, an agent was sent from Philadelphia to purchase the site for Archibald Wright, a Philadelphia salt merchant. Wright seems to have held the property in name only; much of it was soon deeded to his son, John A. Wright, also of Philadelphia and an early advocate for the PRR charter and a founding member of its board of directors. John Wright graduated from Dickinson College in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, with a degree in civil engineering. His first job was with the engineering firm commissioned by the state to survey the Juniata and Conemaugh valleys and the intervening Allegheny Mountains for a rail route. In 1848 Wright became president of the Freedom Ironworks in Lewistown, Pennsylvania. A year later Lewistown became the PRR's first connection west of Harrisburg.<sup>6</sup>

In this early period of his career, Wright worked with another engineer, J. Edgar Thomson. When the PRR was formed, Wright recommended Thomson as chief engineer, and he was hired away from his engineer's post with a Georgia railroad. In some accounts this is an important fact in Altoona's history because "Altoona" is alleged to be an Americanized version of "Allatoona," a word meaning "high land of great worth" in the language of the Cherokee Indians of Georgia. In another version of this attribution, Archibald Wright is credited with naming the town after spending time in Georgia. Still another source claims that Altoona was named after an important railway

Population of Altoona			
Year	Total Population	Number of Foreign-born	Percentage Foreign-born
1860	3,510	(not available)	
1870	10,618	1,491	14.0
1880	19,710	2,092	10.6
1890	30,337	3,107	10.2
1900	38,973	3,301	8.5
1910	52,127	5,212	10.0
1920	60,331	5,312	8.8
1930	82,054	5,951	7.3
1940	80,214	2,671	3.3
1950	77,177	3,790	4.9
1960	69,407	2,915	4.2
1970	81,225	1,937	2.4
1980	57,078	990	1.7

Fig. 23 Population of Altoona, 1860-1980, U.S. Bureau of the Census.

<sup>6</sup>Thomas Lynch Montgomery, ed. *Encyclopedia of Pennsylvania Biography* (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Company, 1923), 14:85-7. Sipes, 12.

center near Hamburg in Europe. The Cherokee derivation seems to be the most popular.<sup>7</sup>

The land Wright purchased in 1849--the David and Susannah Robeson farm--became the core of Altoona. Consisting of 224 acres, it was plotted on a grid plan and was bisected into East and West Altoona by the railroad tracks. The PRR main line ran along what is now 10th Avenue; the branch line to Hollidaysburg angled off from the main line along what is now 9th Avenue. Streets on each side of the town paralleled these two lines, so they do not parallel each other. The original streets (running east-west) and avenues (running north-south) were given feminine names, reportedly after the sweethearts of the engineers gathered to survey the "improvements" in the area. The names were changed to numerals in 1869. Wright donated a thirty-five-acre triangular tract between the tracks to the PRR for its shops, and retained Clement Jaggard to sell the remainder of the property as town lots.<sup>8</sup>

Robeson's neighbors, Andrew Green on the north and William Loudon to the south, saw the good fortune that had befallen him and decided to try their own luck at land speculation. They plotted the towns of Greensburg (comprising the present 7th to 11th streets area) and Loudonsville (between 16th and 18th streets) and also began selling lots. Unfortunately, whether due to competition or simple lack of coordination between Wright and the farmers, the street plans of the three contiguous towns did not coincide so that there is an offset in the avenues where they cross the borders of these original divisions (Fig. 2.4).<sup>9</sup>

John Wright's tenure as a PRR director lasted only from 1847-48, but the board minutes indicate that he continued to act at least occasionally as the company's agent. An item entered July 23, 1851, recorded the receipt of a deed from Wright "for a lot purchased for the house and office of the General Superintendent at Altoona for which he paid \$700 and he desires that amount be passed to his credit."<sup>10</sup> Wright clearly saw no conflict of interest between his advocacy and employment with the PRR and his personal enrichment from these inside contacts. In 1850, knowing that the PRR was planning to build a large hotel in either Altoona or Hollidaysburg, he wrote to the board of directors listing the advantages of the former and the disadvantages of the latter as a site for the hotel. The Altoona site was selected, and in 1853 Wright sold the PRR the block bordered by 10th and 11th avenues and 12th and 13th streets where the hotel was built for \$8,000, only \$3,000 less than his father paid for the entire 224-acre tract.<sup>11</sup> In one instance in the Fourth Ward, Wright built four houses on neighboring lots and sold these to Altoona immigrants, but most of his property was sold as vacant lots. Wright had no problem recouping his investment as Altoona's population grew with people who came to take jobs with the PRR or to find work in the economy that grew up around it.

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<sup>7</sup>Altoona Mirror (August 6, 1949), 20. Wolf, 26. Tarring S. Davis, ed. *A History of Blair County, Pennsylvania* (Harrisburg: National Historical Association, Inc., 1931), I:128. "How Altoona Was Named," *Altoona Tribune* (January 27, 1876).

<sup>8</sup>Africa, 135-38. "The Heart of the Alleghenies," *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* 62 (August 1883): 327.

<sup>9</sup>Davis, 129. Africa, 147. Sipes, 139.

<sup>10</sup>Paige, 129. PRR Directors' *Minutes*, 1 (7/23/1851): 482.

<sup>11</sup>PRR Directors' *Minutes* 1 (12/1/1850): 355; 2 (5/11/1853): 342. Deed book D/453.

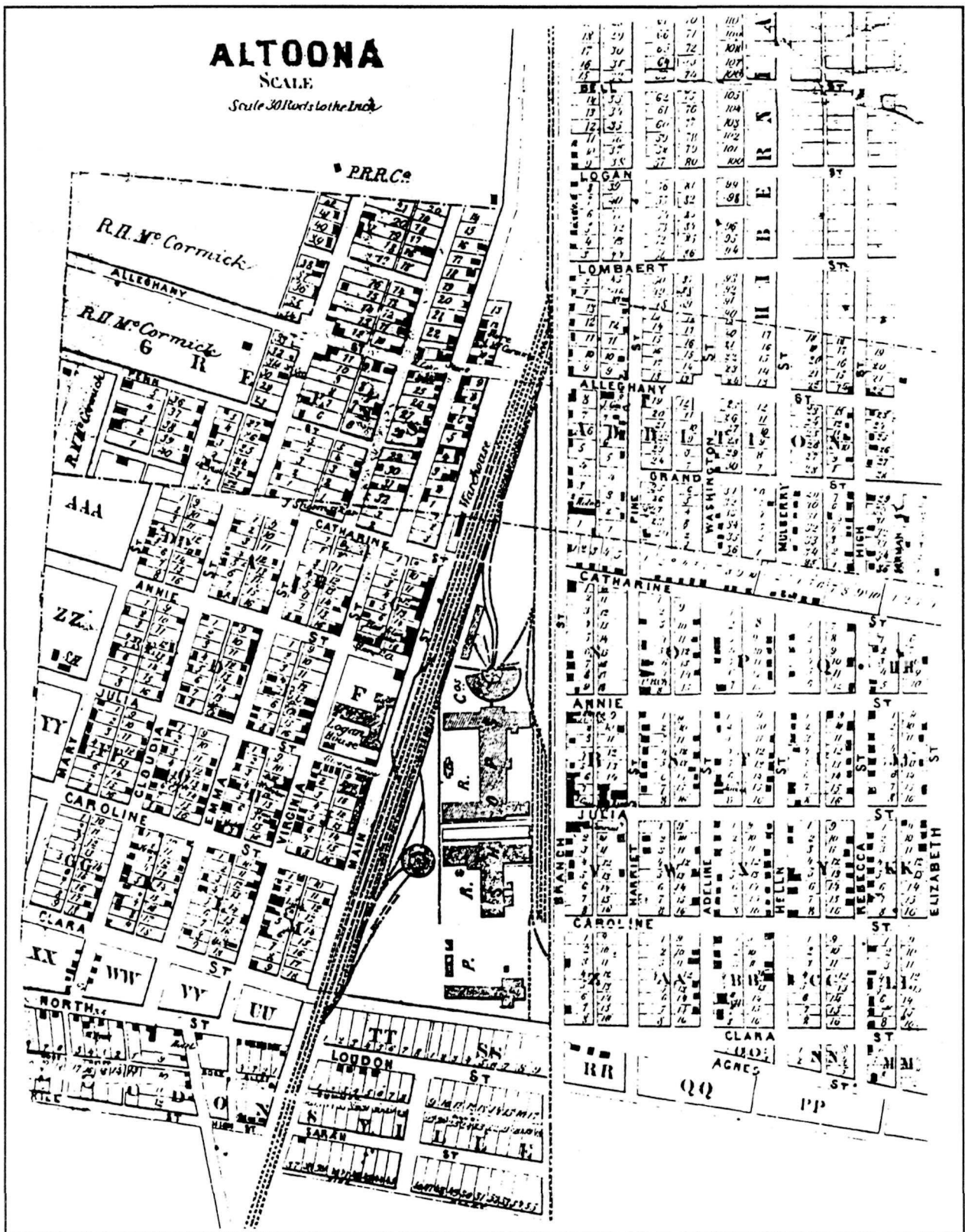


Fig. 2.4 "Altoona" from Map of Blair County, 1859, 1983 reprint. Greensburg is the section nearest the top of the page, Loudonsville is at the bottom.

## Logan House

Railroad passengers who disembarked at Altoona were sheltered by an open, iron railway station, "a model of lightness and elegance," and then entered the PRR hotel, the Logan House, a four-story brick Italianate structure opened in 1855 (Fig. 2.5). The PRR built the hotel and then leased it to a private manager; in 1857 it was insured for \$40,000.

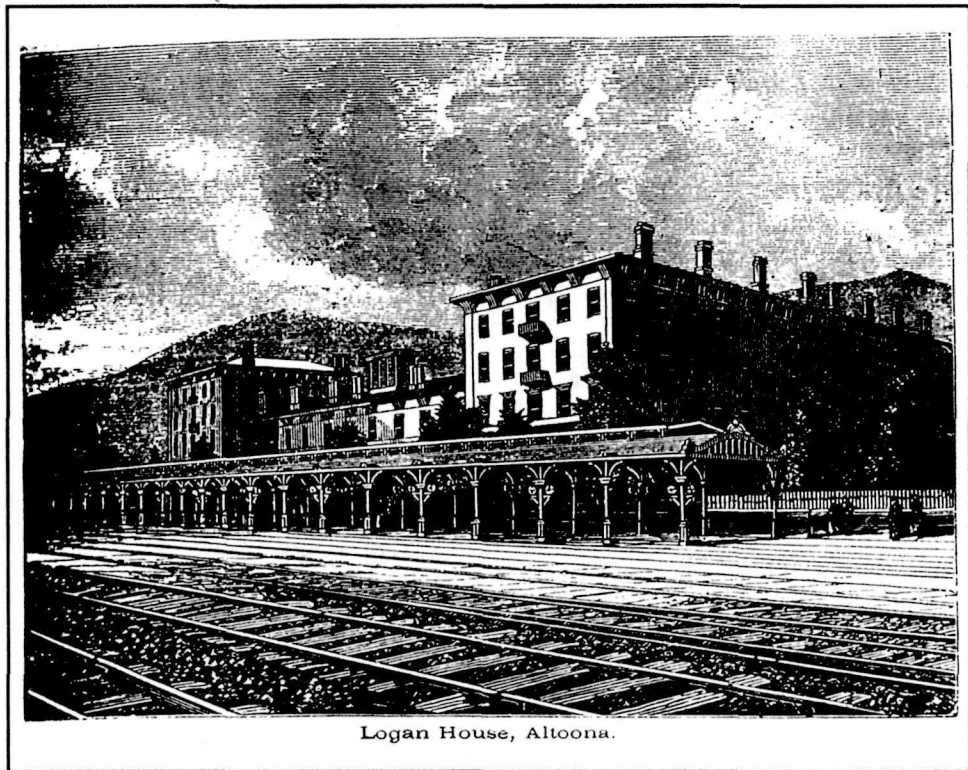


Fig. 2.5 Logan House, illustration from *Pennsylvania Illustrated* (1874), 17.

Heralded as a world-famous luxury hotel, the Logan House gained additional fame as the site of the Loyal War Governors' Conference, September 24, 1862, when governors of the northern states met to declare allegiance to the Union. From time to time the PRR would allocate funds for repairs and improvements to the building, but by 1931 it was considered antiquated and in such disrepair that it was demolished.<sup>12</sup> The Altoona community still feels the loss of the building that had come to represent the city.

## Company Housing

The Logan House answered the need for railroad-passenger accommodations, but housing railroad workers in Altoona was another important concern of PRR officials. The car shops had been established in a virtual wilderness and a PRR publication noted that "for years after the railroad shops were put in operation, it was found difficult to keep workmen here. Aside from the liberal wages paid, the place had no attractions." In 1916, one of Altoona's oldest citizens recounted that when he first arrived in the town in 1851, he lived in a "shanty" and slept in a bunk with a mattress of straw. Another resident recalled that one of his first jobs in Altoona was helping to build a PRR boarding house, suggesting that the company made

<sup>12</sup>*Pennsylvania Illustrated* (Philadelphia, 1874), 16-7. PRR Directors' *Minutes* 2 (3/30/1853): 324; 2 (4/13/1853): 333; 2 (5/17/1854): 460; 2 (5/31/1854): 464; 3 (9/19/1857): 258; 12 (12/26/1888): 146; 13 (11/14/1894): 495.



some effort to house its workers.<sup>13</sup> Reverend W. B. Glanding, whose father moved to Altoona to work as a springmaker for the PRR, wrote:

when the Pennsylvania Railroad company located their works in this place it pursued a humane policy. It built dwelling houses for its employees in several sections of the village and permitted the purchaser to pay for his property in easy installments. These were called "Company Houses."<sup>14</sup>

Despite Glanding's assertion, the PRR was, in fact, reluctant to provide housing for many of its employees. Another early resident wrote that:

with all its beautiful environment the town was . . . deadly uninteresting and almost squalid. Outside of a dozen or so houses which the railroad built for the officers and higher workmen, the dwellings were makeshift wooden affairs, most of them painted a dull drab unrelieved by any trimming.<sup>15</sup>

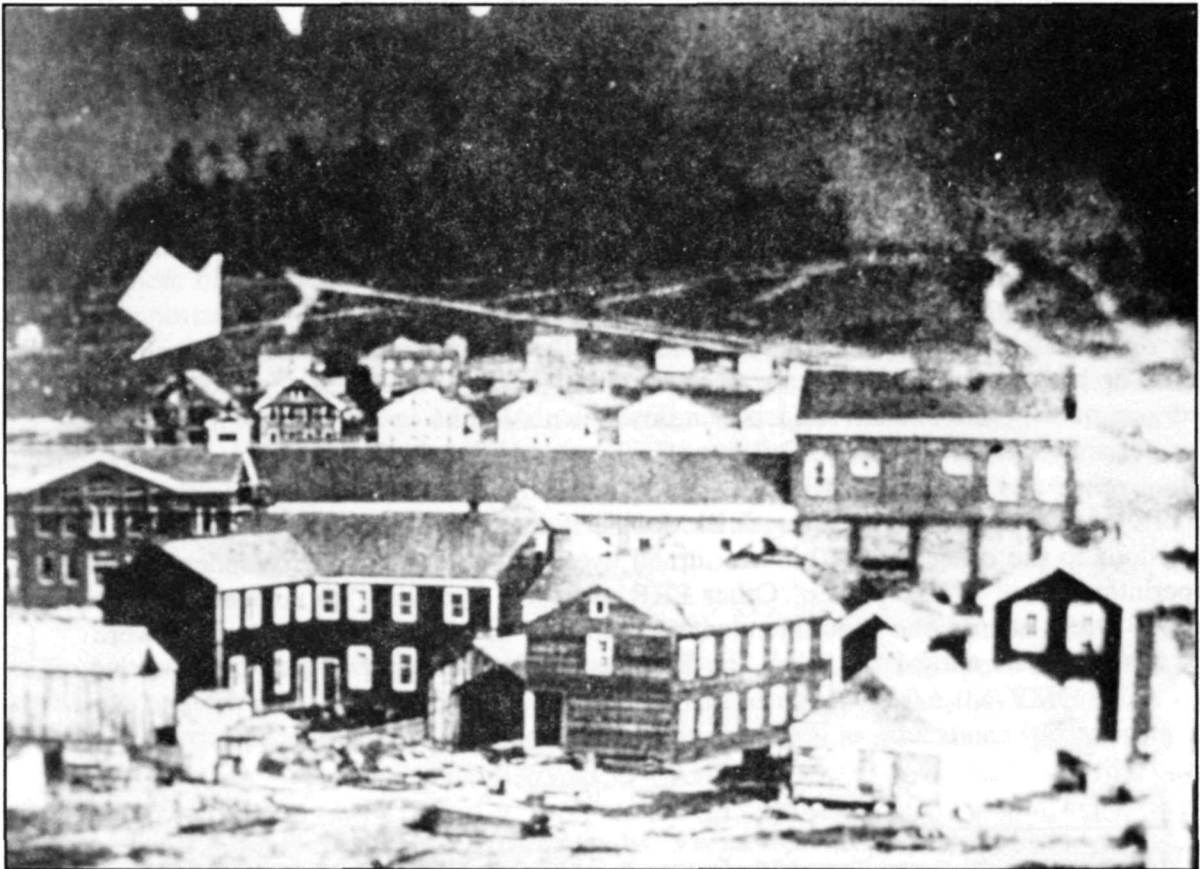


Fig. 2.6 Detail of 1853 photo of Altoona, looking southeast. Arrow indicates row of company houses on 8th Avenue.

<sup>13</sup>Sipes, 139. "Robert D. Steel Is Our Oldest Citizen," Altoona Tribune, (January 15, 1916), sec. 5, 13. "John A. Smith Helped Build First House Erected in Altoona," sec. 2, 11.

<sup>14</sup>Rev. W. M. B. Glanding, "Eighth Avenue When the City Was a Village," Altoona Tribune (January 15, 1916), sec. 3, 3.

<sup>15</sup>Edgar Custer, No Royal Road (New York: H. C. Kinsey & Co., 1937), 2.

Herman Haupt, the PRR's Altoona-based superintendent of transportation, acknowledged the housing problem in 1852 and explained the PRR's policy. "It has been considered inexpedient to divert funds of the Company from the legitimate object of their appropriation, in the construction and equipment of the road." Haupt had stressed to PRR President William Patterson "the importance of providing in time suitable accommodations for our operatives at Altoona, but Patterson preferred that housing be funded by 'private capital.'" Haupt decided to provide the private capital himself and formed a joint stock association ("to which I myself was a large contributor") to construct thirty-two houses. When he left Altoona the next year, Haupt requested that the PRR take over the venture, at least to complete the immediate commitment of eight double houses. He again urged that the buildings "are indispensable and no transfer of our operations to Altoona can be made until they are erected."<sup>16</sup>

At most, the PRR owned eleven double houses, including eight on 8th Avenue, probably those Haupt had initiated. The houses were pictured in an 1853 photograph, where they appear to have gable-front roofs and four-bay fronts (Fig. 2.6). Still following the policy of staying out of such investments, the company sold the houses to their employee-occupants in 1859 "on terms advantageous to both parties."<sup>17</sup> The purchasers included Jacob Szink, a fireman, 1205 8th Ave.; Ambrose Ward, a car inspector, No. 1209; and John Glanding, a blacksmith, No. 1227. Only one of these houses remains, 1121-23 8th Ave., the double house owned by John McCormick, trainmaster, and George W. Hawksworth, foreman of the blacksmith shop. The two-and-a-half-story wood-frame house, now much altered, has a gable-front roof with paired round-arched windows in the gable, and ornamental bargeboards (Appendix A).<sup>18</sup>

Although the PRR soon divested itself of these houses, it did maintain an interest in providing housing for a few persons in upper management. The PRR built an office building and general superintendent's residence in downtown Altoona in 1851-52, at the corner of 11th Avenue and 12th Street. In 1863 it constructed an additional office building on the corner of 12th Avenue and 12th Street which is altered but extant. The chief engineer and division superintendent shared a three-story brick double house, constructed in 1859, on 11th Avenue next door to the office; in 1870 it was turned over to the general superintendent and the superintendent of motive power. Other PRR managers lived on 12th Avenue in the same block. These houses, the superintendent's house, and the office on 11th Avenue were demolished in the early 1920s when the PRR reorganized and moved its administrative offices

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<sup>16</sup>Watkins, 3:8. Eighth Annual Report of the Directors of the Pennsylvania Railroad Company to the Stockholders, February 3, 1862 (Philadelphia: Crissy & Markley, 1862), 41. Thirteenth Annual Report of the Directors of the Pennsylvania Railroad Company to the Stockholders, February 6, 1860 (Philadelphia: Crissy & Markley, 1852), 64. Herman Haupt to J. Edgar Thomson, Philadelphia, August 3, 1852, Herman Haupt letterbook, 214.

<sup>17</sup>Robert L. Emerson, Allegheny Passage: An Illustrated History of Blair County (Woodland Hills, Calif.: Windsor Publications, 1984), 34. Bird's-Eye View of Altoona, Pa. (Fowler and Bailer, 1872). Thirteenth Annual Report, 45.

<sup>18</sup>Deed books: V/585 (No. 1205), R/362 (No. 1209), R/42 (No. 1227), 30/654 (No. 1121), T/257 (No. 1123). J.H. Lant, Blair County Directory for 1870-71 (Altoona: Advance News Co., 1870).

to Philadelphia and Harrisburg.<sup>19</sup>

Despite the PRR's policy of avoiding community investments and entanglements, it was not averse to claiming responsibility and praise for Altoona's "progress." A Company publication of 1875 reported that the PRR:

has displayed a commendable spirit of liberality toward the city of its creation. Its management has been unremitting in endeavors to make the workman comfortable and contented, knowing that the best skilled labor can only in this way be secured and held.<sup>20</sup>

### Mechanics' Library

One of the PRR's "endeavors" was to establish a Mechanics' Library and Reading Room in 1858; but, again, it was local official Herman Haupt who initiated the project. He wrote the directors in June 1853 asking for a contribution and received a \$500 appropriation. The library was open to anyone who paid a small annual fee. Over the years it was housed in several PRR buildings, including the motive power shop, the ticket office, and the Logan House annex.<sup>21</sup>

The board of directors approved regular donations to support the Mechanics' Library. When it organized as the Altoona Library Association, the board subscribed to \$500 worth of its stock per year with the stipulation that library rules and regulations be subject to the board's approval. In 1885 the contribution was raised to \$1,000; in 1889 to \$2,500. In 1890, the chairman of the Library Association, PRR chemist Charles B. Dudley, wrote to board members informing them of the number of books borrowed by schoolchildren. The board considered the library so important that in 1896 it arranged for plans and estimates to be prepared for a new facility and the next year authorized up to \$100,000 for a new building; construction plans were never followed through, however. Instead, the library was moved to the former Presbyterian Church on 11th Avenue between 12th and 13th streets. In 1898 the board sent the general superintendent at Altoona portraits of two past PRR presidents--George B. Roberts and Thomas A. Scott--to hang in the reading room. The PRR donated the library to the Altoona School District in 1926. The collection formed the basis for the Altoona Public Library.<sup>22</sup>

### Social Organizations

Another PRR-supported institution in Altoona was the Railroad Men's Christian Association organized in 1876, the second of its kind in the nation. Like the YMCA, the Railroad "Y" provided recreational facilities and activities as well as educational programs and

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<sup>19</sup>PRR Directors' Minutes 1 (1/8/1851): 374; 3 (12/22/1858): 384. Watkins, 3:12. Charles B. Clark, Semi-Centennial History of Blair County (Altoona: 1896), 94. R. L. Polk & Co., R. L. Polk & Co.'s Altoona Directory (Pittsburgh: R. L. Polk & Co., 1900). Tax Assessment Books. Map of the City of Altoona, Pennsylvania (Philadelphia: H. E. Kaufmann, 1882). Wolf, 379.

<sup>20</sup>Sipes, 139.

<sup>21</sup>PRR Directors' Minutes 2 (6/22/1853):353; 2 (7/7/1853): 362. Clark, Illustrated Altoona, 77-8. K. Virginia Krick, "Libraries," in Wolf, 279.

<sup>22</sup>PRR Directors' Minutes (10/14/1885): 86; 8 (2/12/1879): 211; (11/2/1885):90; (4/5/1889):209; 14 (4/8/1896): 207; 14 (10/25/1897): 473; 15 (5/20/1898):63. Krick, 279.

materials for members who were PRR employees affiliated with one of the city's "evangelical" churches. Railroad management liked to encourage employees to spend leisure time at the Y as an alternative to saloons and the union halls of the railroad Brotherhoods. In the early twentieth century the PRR deducted \$1 each year from employees' pay as a contribution to the Y. Other groups using the Altoona Y's meeting rooms included the Altoona Works Chorus, Apprentice Club, Welders Society, Retired Workers Association, Shop Bowling League, Middle Division Band, Pennsylvania Railroad Supervising Agents, Pennsylvania Railroad Veterans Association, Pennsylvania Railroad Floral Association, and Railroad Police Officers School.<sup>23</sup>

These indicate the range and extent of PRR-affiliated social activities in Altoona. The Altoona City Band was another such organization. Formed in 1853, it was

to all intents and purposes a railroad band. The privileges of the players were many and it was of some interest to the musicians to be a member. Concerts were given every week in the Logan House park, at first exclusively for Logan House guests, but later . . . [for the general] population.<sup>24</sup>

PRR sponsorship of the Altoona Band and of a small brass cannon--fired from the city's hillsides "on all gala occasions" to the delight of local youths--gave the company maximum public relations value for minimal expense. Only rarely did the company contribute to the city without the expectation of a similar payback. In 1863 the PRR directors consented to invest "a reasonable amount" in the stock for the erection of a market house and town hall in Altoona. In 1864 they approved the purchase of \$10,000 in borough bonds. It was stipulated that this money would either be credited toward their borough taxes for two years or would be used in a "Bounty Fund," presumably enabling PRR workers to "avoid the coming draft."<sup>25</sup>

### **PRR and Municipal Development**

Although the PRR at one time held at least \$50,000 in Altoona city bonds, thus contributing to city improvements, it generally aided city projects only when it had a direct interest in doing so. An October 1856 editorial in the Altoona Tribune praised the railroad for at least providing the borough with a good example.

The Railroad Company has improved the appearance of the avenue in front of the Logan House by laying substantial brick pavement. We hope that our citizens who own property in the town will find it convenient to follow their example in the near future. The old board walks are wearing out and in many localities are dangerous to pedestrians

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<sup>23</sup>Africa, 169. Clark, Illustrated Altoona, 89. Altoona Mirror (August 6, 1949), 93. Altoona Tribune (January 15, 1916), sec. 4, 5. Shelton Stromquist, A Generation of Boomers: The Pattern of Railroad Labor Conflict in Nineteenth-Century America (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1987), 235. Paige, 85-6.

<sup>24</sup>"A Musical Review of Blair County," Altoona Tribune (January 15, 1916), sec. 3, 14.

<sup>25</sup>Glanding, Altoona Tribune (January 15, 1916), sec. 3, 3. PRR Directors' Minutes, 4 (3/4/1863): 283; 4 (3/18/1863): 285; (2/17/1864): 363; (9/7/1864):404-05.

after night.<sup>26</sup>

Altoona was incorporated as a borough on February 6, 1854. It was administered by a chief burgess and a five-member council. In 1868, Altoona was chartered as a city with a mayor and a twelve-member council (two from each ward). In 1885, the city adopted a bicameral form of government; in 1913 it switched to a commission form.<sup>27</sup> The various administrations faced the formidable task of establishing municipal services that could keep pace with the increase in population. Facilities for public and private transportation, various utilities, police, and fire companies, schools, and hospitals were the matrix that allowed for successful residential developments and bound new homes and neighborhoods to the urban network.

### Street Paving

It took some time before even basic services such as paved streets and sewers were provided, and a number of sources have commented on the consequent appearance of the town. A party of immigrants who arrived looking for work "thought it such a God-forsaken place" that they moved on to Westmoreland County. One resident called the town's early period its "mud age." Even a PRR-sponsored guidebook remarked on Altoona's unattractive appearance:

It is no aspersion upon Altoona to say that, when it first became a town, it was not the most lovely place of residence on the continent. Swamps, marshes, and ponds composed a large portion of its surface, and its streets abounded in mud of the most tenacious kind.<sup>28</sup>

Before 1889 Altoona had no permanent street or sidewalk pavement. In 1873 the city was authorized to issue \$150,000 in bonds to underwrite such improvements. Part of this money was used to macadamize the two main commercial streets in the city--on the East Side, 8th Avenue between 9th and 17th streets; 11th Avenue between 11th and 17th streets on the west side. Unfortunately, this material disintegrated after only a few years, and mud 6 to 12 inches deep sometimes reclaimed 11th Avenue. In 1889 these streets were repaved with asphalt blocks that proved more durable, and gradually several miles of streets were paved. The effort "had the moral support of General Superintendent Frank Sheppard who induced his company to pave several blocks along their property on 11th Avenue and 12th Street." Property owners on 12th Avenue and several along streets on the East Side were inspired by the PRR's work, and sponsored their own paving projects. In 1905 the city floated a loan for more extensive street and sidewalk paving with the provision that the community at large pay one-third of the cost.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>26</sup>PRR Directors' Minutes 6 (9/9/1874): 363. Altoona Tribune (October 16, 1856), reprinted in Altoona Tribune (January 15, 1916), sec. 3, 12.

<sup>27</sup>Clark, Illustrated Altoona, 113. Official Program: Old Home Week, Altoona and Blair County (August 13-19, 1922), 20, 24.

<sup>28</sup>J. R. Bingaman, "Altoona and the Pennsy in 1867," Altoona Tribune (January 15, 1916), sec. 3, 11. Sipes, 139.

<sup>29</sup>Altoona Tribune (January 15, 1916), sec. 5, 13; sec. 3, 3, 13. Clark, Illustrated Altoona, 61-2.



## Sewers

Construction of a sewer system was another concern of the new city government, for "during the village days of Altoona, the sewer system, like the grades, was a law unto itself." An early resident complained that he "was obliged to use a barrel of lime in front of his home [built in 1859 at 1014 Green Ave.] for fifteen years to make the surroundings sanitary." Records indicate that the first sewer line was laid through the main commercial district along 11th Avenue from 13th to 15th streets to 10th Avenue in 1870. The next year a line was constructed through two blocks of the East Side commercial district, 8th Avenue from 9th to 12th streets. The First and Third Wards around the main commercial district were the next priority; a sewer was laid across them zigzagging from 10th Avenue and 9th Street to 14th Avenue and 13th Street. The East Side's Sixth, Fourth, Second and Eighth Wards were served next, receiving lines by 1874.<sup>30</sup>

By the 1880s the city engineer took a more systematic approach to sewer construction by dividing the city into four districts that conformed to natural drainage areas. The first three, covering the north half of the city, were drained into the Juniata River. A sewer line for the Fourth District, the area on both sides of the city south of 13th and 15th streets, was begun in 1888 but was delayed by injunctions obtained by property owners south of the city who objected to having sewage drain into their streams and springs. In 1891 Peter Good, a farmer two-and-one-half miles from the city limits, was awarded \$5,000 for pollution damages. In 1895 city engineers redesigned the line to discharge on a sandy flat three miles south of the city where they believed "it would be filtered and purified without injury to anyone." The PRR directors approved a loan of up to \$20,000 to the city for the completion of the Fourth District project. The company was interested in seeing the sewer completed because it owned property in South Altoona. City and PRR cooperation was also noted in 1914 when the directors consented to the city building sewer lines on its property near Juniata Borough. The company contributed \$6,896 to the construction and was granted the right to connect to the lines and to the city's new sewer in the Fairview neighborhood and to a new "disposal plant near East Altoona."<sup>31</sup>

## Water

Until 1859 Altoona residents relied on wells and cisterns for their water supply, but that year the Altoona Gas and Water Company began service to the borough. In 1855 the state had granted the borough the sole right to supply its water, but the council could not afford to undertake the project and transferred the right to the Gas and Water Company. Although privately organized, the company was closely affiliated with the PRR. In fact, the PRR owned a significant amount of stock in the company and the PRR directors authorized company President William H. Wilson to vote on their behalf. In 1858 the council agreed to allow the PRR to lay water lines through the borough and arranged to contract for any water surplus.

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<sup>30</sup>J. N. Tillard, "Our Municipal Development," Altoona Tribune (January 15, 1916), sec. 3, 13. Clark, Illustrated Altoona, 64-74.

<sup>31</sup>The First District sewer, serving the west side between 7th and 15th streets, was completed in 1893. The Second District line was finished in 1894 and served the East Side from 12th Street north to the city limits. The Third District sewer, also completed in 1894, served the west side area north of 7th Street. Clark, Illustrated Altoona, 69-74. PRR Directors' Minutes 13 (6/22/1892): 158; 23 (12/23/1914):468.

For a time, Gas and Water Company customers received water brought into the borough by the PRR, and in November 1859 the president of the company petitioned the PRR directors for a loan to complete its works. The PRR granted the request by taking a \$10,000 first mortgage on the company property. Both the PRR and the Altoona Gas and Water Company obtained their water from a reservoir fed by Pottsgrove Run. This stream, across the Pleasant Valley east of town, also powered Pottsgrove Mill and was used by farmers along its length. The PRR employed a crew of black laborers to dig a ditch from the shops to the mill dam. One morning these men arrived at the ditch to find that about twenty men and boys had filled it back in, protesting the obstruction of their farms' water supply. The PRR responded by providing and maintaining a pipeline to each farm.<sup>32</sup>

The Altoona Gas and Water Company line led to a distributing reservoir on the hill at the corner of 15th Avenue and 12th Street. The pipes were only 4 inches in diameter and the borough soon outgrew their capacity. In 1872 the PRR bought the company's Pottsgrove and 15th Avenue reservoirs for \$33,360, easing its own increasing need for water. The water franchise and the lines in Altoona were sold to the city, which began construction of a larger reservoir at Kittanning Point within the bend of the Horseshoe Curve. A new 3 million gallon storage reservoir was built on Prospect Hill on the city's East Side. A second reservoir at Kittanning Point was completed in 1896. The PRR continued to be involved in the city's efforts to meet the growing demand for water. In November 1887, the PRR directors approved a resolution:

that in order to aid the City of Altoona to secure an increased water supply in which the Pennsylvania Railroad Company is deeply interested, the Treasurer of this Company therefore is authorized to advance from time to time to Wylie and Fraser and other contractors with said City of Altoona a sum . . . not exceeding \$100,000.

In 1897, the directors approved a loan of "up to \$35,000 to the City of Altoona for paving the flood water channel of Kittanning Point Reservoir." These reservoirs, set in a fold of the wooded mountain still serve the city, and are still an impressive sight. As Clifford Clark remarked in 1896, "they are in some respects a work of art and attract the attention of all daylight travelers over the Pennsylvania Railroad."<sup>33</sup>

## Gas

The gasworks of the Altoona Gas and Water Company was located at 11th Avenue between 8th and 9th streets. In 1859 it had the capacity to supply 30,000 cubic feet of illuminating gas each day. By 1883 demand had increased so much that capacity was upgraded to 150,000 feet per day. In the early days of the system, when consumption by PRR shops was high, the East Side of the city was often "poorly lighted." A larger, 6-inch main laid across 12th Street solved this problem, but by 1891 the gas company made plans for a larger modern plant on four-and-one-half acres at 7th Avenue and 1st Street. The new property was purchased

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<sup>32</sup>Africa, 154. PRR Directors' Minutes 3 (11/23/1859): 447. "Great Storm That Killed Vegetation," Altoona Tribune (January 15, 1916), sec. 3, 5.

<sup>33</sup>PRR Directors' Minutes 5 (5/29/1867): 139; 5 (6/28/1871): 466; 5 (5/24/1871): 465; 11 (11/1/1887): 395; 14 (10/27/1897): 470. Clark, Illustrated Altoona, 41-3.

from the PRR for \$16,000; in exchange, the gas company tore down its old plant and received \$32,000 for the land from the PRR, which used it to build side tracks and a freight shed.<sup>34</sup>

When the water division of the Altoona Gas and Water Company was sold to the city and PRR in 1872, its name was shortened to the Altoona Gas Company. In the next few years the PRR sold \$55,000 worth of its stock in the company to "reduce [its] floating debt," but retained influence in the company. In October 1875, the directors' meeting minutes recorded that the Altoona Gas Company agreed to grant the PRR a reduction in the price of gas for its Altoona properties, including the Logan House. At the same meeting, the directors recommended that PRR employee J. B. Collin, then mechanical engineer in the Altoona office of motive power, "be allowed to retain his position as President of the Altoona Gas Company with the salary attached thereto." In 1913 the company became the Altoona Gas, Light, and Fuel Company.<sup>35</sup>

### Hospitals

The last two decades of the nineteenth century were prosperous ones for the city, and a number of improvements often linked to the PRR were introduced. The Altoona Hospital, opened in 1886, was founded with a \$15,000 state appropriation and matching local funds, such as \$1,000 from the Altoona Gas Company and \$4,722 from PRR employees. The PRR donated \$7,000 and a four-acre plot on Howard Avenue at 6th and 7th streets for the hospital grounds and continued to make regular donations after the hospital opened. The PRR contributed \$10,000 for an east-wing addition, completed in 1904, and \$3,000 for a nurses' home in 1905.<sup>36</sup> Mercy Hospital, located in the city's "west end," was chartered in 1909. It was first housed in a private residence at 8th Avenue and 26th Street, and expanded into a new building in 1917.<sup>37</sup>

### Telephone and Protection Services

Other signs of municipal maturity included Altoona's first telephone exchange, connected, of course, to the PRR shops in 1880. The Edison Electric Illuminating Company began providing the city with electricity in 1886.<sup>38</sup> In 1894 a patrol wagon was purchased for the city police department. It replaced the wheelbarrows and carts previously used to transport intoxicated and otherwise disabled prisoners. By 1900, the department had a staff of sixteen.<sup>39</sup> The city's volunteer fire companies, organized in 1859 with the first city water supply, were

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<sup>34</sup>Clark, *Illustrated Altoona*, 40. Africa, 155. PRR Directors' *Minutes* 13 (5/13/1891): 4.

<sup>35</sup>Clark, *Illustrated Altoona*, 40. PRR Directors' *Minutes*, 6 (9/23/1874): 365; 7 (9/8/1875): 63; 7 (10/13/1875): 81. *Altoona Tribune* (January 15, 1916), sec.3, 15.

<sup>36</sup>Clark, *Illustrated Altoona*, 121-2. PRR Directors' *Minutes*, 10 (9/10/1884): 388, 403, 439; 11 (4/14/1886): 18; 11 (11/24/1886): 260; 12 (3/25/1891): 484; 12 (3/25/1891): 477, 486; 17 (6/24/1903): 287; 17 (5/24/1905): 332.

<sup>37</sup>George A. Wolf, "The Mercy Hospital," in Wolf, 415-16.

<sup>38</sup>Clark, *Illustrated Altoona*, 40.

<sup>39</sup>"Altoona Progress Week Suggestions to Speakers and Altoona Progress Facts," (Chamber of Commerce, 1927), typescript.

replaced with a professional department in 1895.<sup>40</sup>

### **Streetcar Lines**

In 1880 the first street railway, the City Passenger Railway Company, was established. It was originally about three miles long and extended along 11th and 8th avenues. A second street railway, the Altoona and Logan Valley Electric Railway Company (ALVERy), was formed in 1892 to connect Altoona with Hollidaysburg on the south and with Bellwood and Tyrone to the north. The PRR invested \$100,000 in the new company which soon gained a controlling interest in and combined operations with the City Passenger Railway.<sup>41</sup>

The opening of the streetcar lines dramatically altered the local landscape by promoting development and giving residents access to different parts of the city and to towns up to fourteen miles away. Within the city, the streetcar formed a link between its halves, running an essentially circular route around the PRR shops and across the PRR main line tracks. While the PRR made various contributions to the establishment of the city's infrastructure, its expanding shops shaped the city in even more literal ways.

### **PRR and City Expansion**

In 1855, 1,000 PRR employees at Altoona repaired and constructed railway cars, and manufactured iron tracks and parts for locomotives and bridges. By 1869, because of increased demand for locomotive and car repairs during and after the Civil War, the original shop site, extending from 12th to 15th Street between 9th and 10th avenues, was congested with buildings, tracks, and equipment. The PRR purchased additional land in the Logantown section along Chestnut Avenue northeast of 7th Street. Facilities for repair and construction of cars were built on this site, the "Lower Shops." The Locomotive Department, upgraded to build as well as repair locomotives, took over all of the original complex. In 1883, the PRR employed 5,000 men in Altoona, and the shops were described as "the largest of their kind in the world."<sup>42</sup>

PRR business continued to boom and plans for further expansion north of the Lower Shops were begun in 1886. The first Juniata shops for locomotive erection and repair were completed in 1890; by 1916 the complex extended about two miles. In 1903, with 10,000 employees working on the line and at the Juniata and main machine and car shops, the PRR purchased eighty-five acres in South Altoona and built a foundry complex to make iron castings for locomotives and cars. At peak production the foundry produced 900 wheels per day. An oil mixing and testing plant built in conjunction with the foundry supplied petroleum products to the entire PRR system. In the 1920s about 15,000 men worked for the PRR at Altoona, site of "the largest and most important railroad shops not only on the Pennsylvania system, or

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<sup>40</sup>Clark, *Illustrated Altoona*, 117-8.

<sup>41</sup>Clark, *Illustrated Altoona*, 24-5. PRR Directors' *Minutes* 13 (4/13/1893): 277; 13 (10/11/1893): 356.

<sup>42</sup>John C. Paige, *A Special History Study, Pennsylvania Railroad Shops and Works, Altoona, Pennsylvania* (America's Industrial Heritage Project, National Park Service, May 1989), 41. Peter H. Stott, "Pennsylvania Railroad Shops," in "Survey of Historic Structures in Blair and Cambria Counties, Pennsylvania," (Historic American Engineering Record, National Park Service: Washington, 1987), draft typescript, 6. "The Heart of the Alleghenies," 327. Africa, 183.

in all of America, but in the whole world."<sup>43</sup>

For people living in the vicinity of the expanding shops, it was hard to forget that they lived in the railroad city. Smoke and soot covered everything. Whistles calling men to work and the whistle and clamor of trains were heard throughout the neighborhoods. One resident recalled the walk from the train station to her aunt's house, "following the great high board fence that enclosed the railroad yards with all their mysterious, booming, clanking, whistling noises, and seeing the bridges over the yards. . . ."<sup>44</sup>

### Track Crossings

Early crossings over the tracks and shops connecting each side of the city were built at 17th and 9th streets. In 1863 the PRR built an iron footbridge at 12th Street, which it replaced in the 1880s. In 1888, a new bridge was erected at 17th Street. The PRR and the city built a vehicular bridge at 7th Street after the PRR closed the wagon crossing at 9th Street in 1886. The PRR approved

an agreement with the city in 1888 for construction of an iron pedestrian bridge across the tracks at 9th Street. An 800-foot-long footbridge at 4th Street was also built in the 1880s. It allowed the PRR to close 4th Street to the public and place its car shops in one enclosure. The oldest extant bridge is at 7th Street; opened in 1913 as a double-track trolley and pedestrian structure, it has been converted for automobile use. A city ordinance dated August 12, 1895, prohibited pedestrian traffic on Union Avenue over the Hollidaysburg Branch line at 9th Avenue, provided that the PRR widened a pedestrian culvert under its main line at Union Avenue. In 1911 the PRR built another subway at Union Avenue between 22nd and 23rd



Fig. 2.7 Altoona "Alto" signal tower, main line at 17th Street bridge, looking southwest.

<sup>43</sup>Pennsylvania Railroad Company, *Altoona Shops and Motive Power Statistics* (Altoona: Office of the General Superintendent of Motive Power, 1890). *History of the First Twenty-Five Years of the Work of the Pennsylvania Railroad YMCA of Altoona, Pa.* (Altoona *Tribune*, 1901). Paige, 18, 23. "Chief Industry of Railroad City," *Altoona Tribune* (January 15, 1916), sec. 5, 1.

<sup>44</sup>Grace K. Ebright, "Seeing a City Grow," *Altoona Mirror* (August 6, 1949), 9.



streets. One-fourth of the estimated \$7,448 cost was to be contributed by the city.<sup>45</sup>

The bridges and tunnels linking the neighborhoods, shops, and commercial areas were built and shifted as the city grew with the Railroad. The city's population peaked at 82,000 in 1930 at the same time as PRR expansion and employment. The first residents were drawn to the muddy, smoky town by the promise of steady employment. One young man who became a PRR brakeman left Perry County west of Harrisburg with several friends, "having learned of important developments at Altoona." To underline the tenuousness and dependence of the settlement on the PRR, he recounted that in the 1850s he had the opportunity to purchase one side of 11th Avenue between 11th and 12th streets, prime commercial property, but decided against it because of "the uncertainty of the company's activities and the fact that they had bought a big farm near Philadelphia caused some of the officials to be apprehensive that Altoona might be abandoned. . . ."<sup>46</sup> But the PRR did not abandon Altoona and the hillsides along the tracks filled up with houses and were delineated as wards and neighborhoods (Fig. 2.8).

### City Developments

Twelfth Avenue and 12th Street, site of the Logan House, was considered the "hub" of the city. Within a block or two were theaters, banks, department stores, the PRR offices and city hall. In 1890, "some of the finest residences" were located nearby along 12th Avenue between 11th and 16th streets and on 14th Avenue near 11th Street. Broad Avenue from 19th to 27th Street was also one of the "most desirable residence locations" in the city.<sup>47</sup> Although not as upscale as these areas, the First Ward, bordering on the north side of the downtown commercial area, was the home of native-born, prosperous professionals and skilled workers who built larger, individualized homes. In contrast, the East Side neighborhood on the slopes of Prospect Hill, encompassed in part by the Fourth Ward, became the home of so many German immigrants that it became locally known as "Dutch Hill." While there are some large high-style houses here, the majority are more modest and fall into a limited number of building types that are found across the city.

As lots within the original borough limits filled in, investors platted neighboring developments. Millville, bordering the southern limit of 27th Street, was laid out by Dr. S. C. Baker about 1870. Like much of South Altoona, it was subdivided from ironmaster Elias Baker's property surrounding Allegheny Furnace and his 1846 Greek Revival mansion. S. C. Baker christened the development "Allegheny" but Millville, the name given a smaller adjacent plot, became more popular. The Altoona Rolling Mill, the successor to the antebellum

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<sup>45</sup> *Altoona Mirror* (August 4, 1949). C. B. Clark's *Altoona City Directory for 1888* (Altoona: Barclay Brothers Sun Steam Printers, 1888). Watkins, 2:222; 3:15, 25. PRR Directors' *Minutes*, 12 (11/14/1888): 124; 14 (9/11/1895): 114; 21 (11/23/1910): 316; 21 (1/11/1911): 348; 21 (4/12/1911): 485.

<sup>46</sup> "Robert D. Steel Is Our Oldest Citizen," *Altoona Tribune* (January 15, 1916), sec. 5, 13.

<sup>47</sup> Clark, *Illustrated Altoona*, 5-6. Clark, *Clark's Directory for the City of Altoona, Pennsylvania, for the Year 1890* (Altoona: Barclay Brothers Sun Steam Printers, 1890), 51.

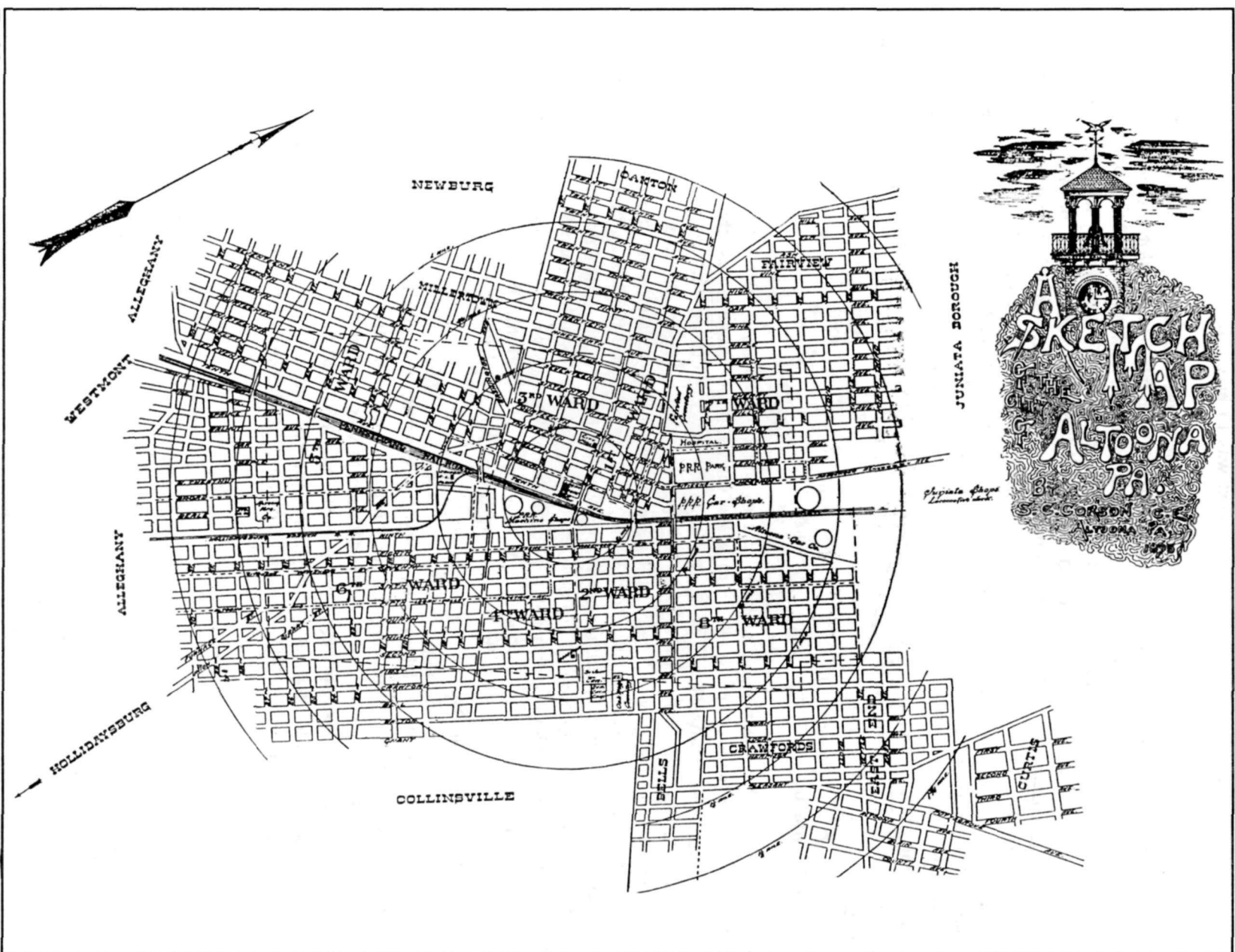


Fig. 2.8 "A Sketch Map of Altoona, Pa.," with neighborhoods labeled, Illustrated Altoona, 1895.

Allegheny Iron Furnace, provided inspiration for the name.<sup>48</sup>

Westmont, just west of Millville, was developed by E. H. Flick in the early 1890s. Flick planted shade trees along its streets and commissioned a number of houses from local architects Michael and Louis Beezer. In 1895 Charles B. Clark wrote that Westmont "seems destined to become the most popular suburb of Altoona."<sup>49</sup>

In contrast to the "quite level" expanse of Millville and Westmont, Fairview was "situated on ground considerably elevated above the central parts of Altoona," hence its name. It was located to the north of 18th Avenue and 11th Street and was noted as the home of "a great many employees of the Pennsylvania Railroad Car Shops."<sup>50</sup>

East Side suburbs included the East End, northeast of 1st Avenue and 1st Street, and Pottsgrove, around the old mill and reservoir on the east side of Pleasant Valley. Collinsville, a village in Pleasant Valley at the southeast extension of 16th Street, was older than Altoona but suffered a decline and was surpassed by the new settlement. Altoonans nicknamed it "Mudtown," a case of "the pot calling the kettle black."<sup>51</sup>

In 1916 Juniata, about one-half mile northeast of the city line, was the second largest borough in Blair County. Like Altoona it also began as farmland, owned by William Loudon, Andrew Kipple, and Robert Hutchison. For a time its post office was named Kipple, but it was Hutchison who first sold acre and half-acre lots to "home-building employees of the Pennsylvania Railroad" in the 1870s. In 1880 the village was called Bellview. In 1889 the PRR began building its new locomotive shops alongside the village and it experienced a boom from the "small army of skilled mechanics" who relocated there. The population was 1,000 in 1893 when the borough was chartered. It became known as Juniata and, according to the U. S. Census, was distinguished as the "third town in rapidity of growth" in the country between 1900 and 1910.<sup>52</sup>

While these nineteenth-century suburbs consisted of smaller lots and half-lots and, for the most part, have a more urban aspect, late nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century developments tended to be planned with more generous lots and built up with more suburban house forms. Llyswen, south of Logan Boulevard and projected in 1894 as a streetcar suburb, was the most ambitious. As in Westmont, the signature "Llyswen cottage" house form was designed by the Beezer brothers.<sup>53</sup> Yet, unlike in Westmont, the architect-designed buildings here were commissioned individually.

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<sup>48</sup>Clark, Directory . . . 1890 (1890), 50. Clark, Semi-Centennial, 65.

<sup>49</sup>Clark, Illustrated Altoona, 7.

<sup>50</sup>Clark, Semi-Centennial, 65. Clark, Directory . . . 1890, 50.

<sup>51</sup>Clark, Semi-Centennial, 66. Clark, Directory . . . 1890, 50. Glandinger, Altoona Tribune (January 15, 1916), sec. 3, 3.

<sup>52</sup>"Juniata," Altoona Tribune (January 15, 1916), sec. 5, 5. Clark, Directory . . . 1890, 50. Clark, Semi-Centennial, 66.

<sup>53</sup>Clark, Illustrated Altoona, 9. Clark, Semi-Centennial, 67.

Eldorado in South Altoona was the name given a post office there some time after the discovery of gold in California in 1848. A carding and fulling mill was established here on Burgoon Run near 58th Street. It was succeeded by an axe and pick factory in the 1830s. By the early twentieth century development around the city had reached south to Eldorado and bungalows appeared amidst the scattering of farm and mill buildings. The streetcar line was extended to 58th Street in 1906. In 1908 the Roselawn Land Company, based in Reading, Pa., purchased the Jacob Buck farm between Highland Park and 58th Street. This subdivision of Eldorado was laid out in building lots; by 1915 residents had organized the Roselawn Fire

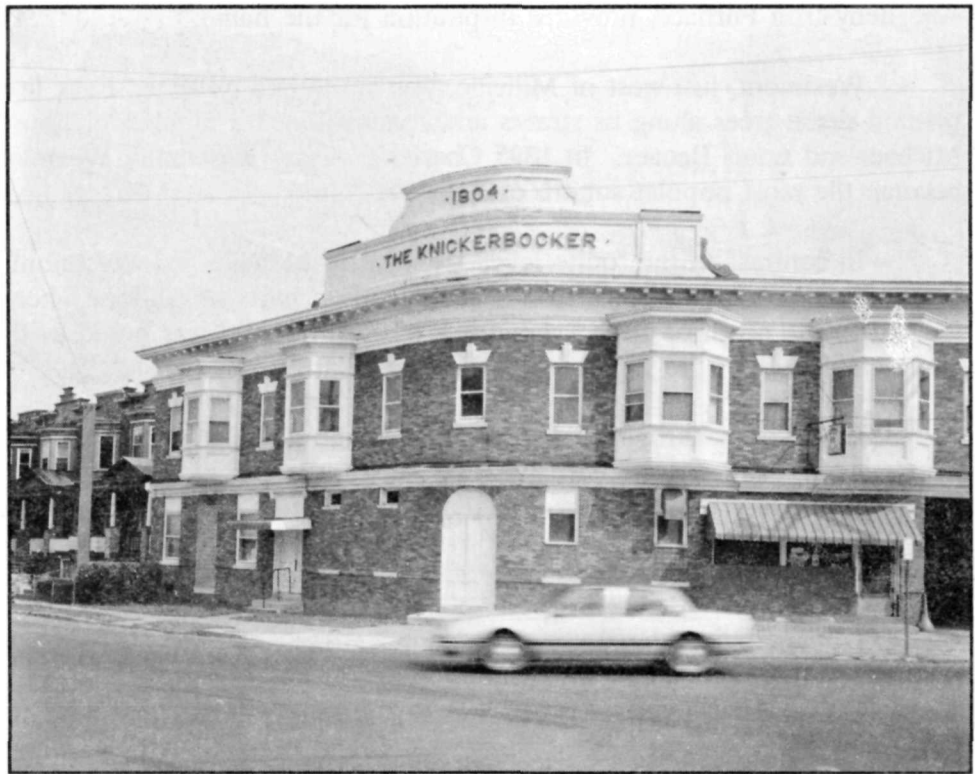


Fig. 2.9 3949-51 6th Ave. at Burgoon Road, "The Knickerbocker" rowhouse complex.

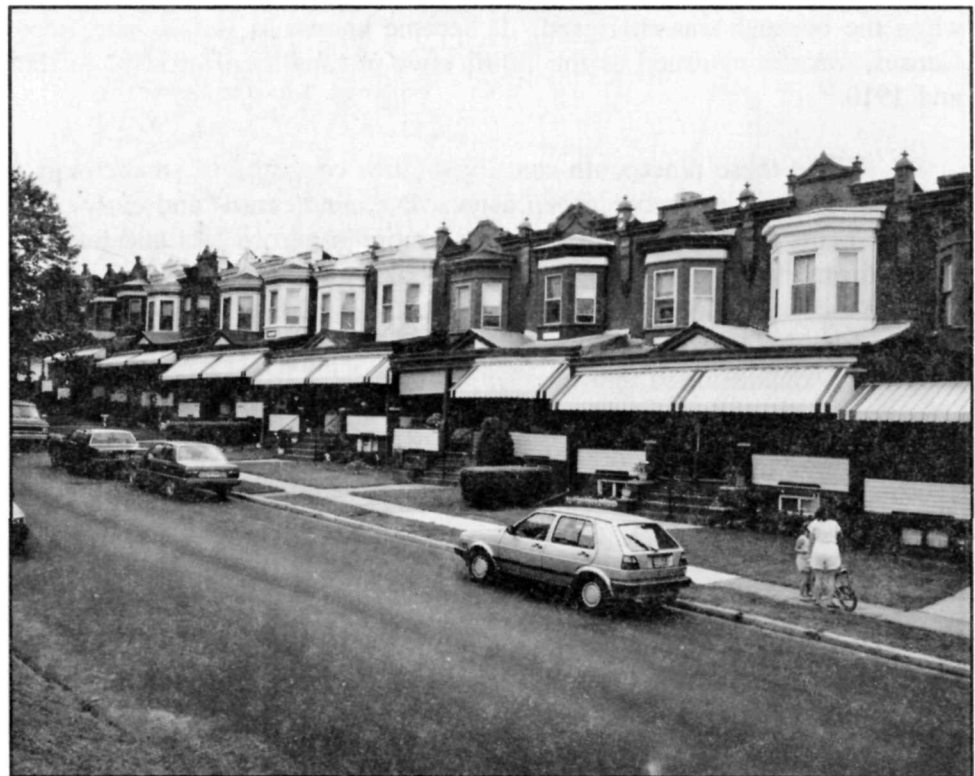


Fig. 2.10 4000 block 4th Avenue, "The Knickerbocker" rowhouse complex.

Company.<sup>54</sup>

The PRR's construction of the South Altoona shops in 1903 was the spur to development of this area. An investor from Philadelphia who learned of the shop expansion purchased a plot of ground across 6th Avenue just east of the shops from the Baker Estate. Rather than sell lots or build speculative suburban house forms, the developer chose to build a Philadelphia-style row house complex that was named "The Knickerbocker" after its construction company (Figs. 2.9-11). The Knickerbocker was held as a rental property by a series of individuals and small investment companies whose members were primarily Philadelphia

businessmen. The owners began to sell the houses, often to their tenants, in the late 1940s and 1950s.<sup>55</sup> The majority of Knickerbocker residents were listed in city directories as PRR shop employees. A number of Altoona and Logan Valley Electric Railway Company employees made their homes here as well since the streetcar company's shops were only a short walk to the north.



Fig. 2.11 4028-20 4th Ave., "The Knickerbocker" rowhouse complex.

In January 1910 the mayor's year-end report to the city council included a harangue against the absentee Knickerbocker owners. The city had given permission for the PRR to connect a line to its Fourth District sewer in 1903. When the mayor learned that the Knickerbocker Construction Company had tapped into the PRR's line without permission, he sent a crew of men to disconnect it. By 1910 the line had again been illegally tapped and the mayor regarded the action as a

rank injustice to the people who spent their hard-earned money to the amount of over

<sup>54</sup>Fred E. Long, *The Eldorado Saga* (Altoona: 58th Street United Methodist Church, 1971), 4, 12, 16-7.

<sup>55</sup>Jimi Yucas, et al., *Project Knickerbocker* (University Park, Pa.: American Institute of Architects, 1978). "Big Real Estate Transfer Is Made," *Altoona Mirror* (August 28, 1924). Philadelphia City Directories.



\$100,000 to construct this intercepting sewer and the filtration plant into which the sewer empties. It is a bold and outrageous attempt to get something for nothing. The idea that foreign capitalists, who do not own a dollar's worth of property in our city, would have the impudence and arrogance to drain their houses into our sewer without a penny's cost or saying so much as 'By your leave'!<sup>56</sup>

In contrast to the Knickerbocker in both form and financing was the Locust Hills development bounded by Beale Avenue, Waterloo Road, West Chestnut Avenue, and 36th Street west of the main line in South Altoona. Sponsored by the Blair Home Company which was made up of local businessmen and realtors, it was intended to counter "bungling development" by "giving Altoona a suburb from which no regrets could ever come." In 1921 the company laid out forty-three lots, graded and paved streets and sidewalks, and installed sewer, water, and gas lines. Next, "a 'house factory' was set up" with "every department of building trades" including carpenters, plumbers, and "concrete men" having its own headquarters. By August 1922 sixteen houses were completed. They were of two general types, "the bungalow type and the other of two stories" and were "set in a semi-circle" along each block with the houses at each end nearest the street "so that the continuous front lawn of a block is in the form of a crescent." One of the houses was completely furnished by Altoona's Gables Department Store as a "sample house."<sup>57</sup>

## Parks

On the northwest side of the Locust Hills home sites, a parcel of land was set aside for public use as Sand Pit Park. Planning for public park space was unusual in Altoona, whose original plan did not include a public green. As a result, Fairview cemetery, laid out in 1857, "was long a place of resort, during spring and summer." (Fig. 2.12) Cemeteries owned by individual churches on Prospect Hill opposite Fairview also provided open green space for city residents, but Altoonans still felt the lack of a central city park. In December 1891, Frank Sheppard, general superintendent of the PRR in Altoona, wrote to the general manager in Philadelphia requesting that some vacant PRR property be landscaped and maintained as a park. Like Herman Haupt's request for company-sponsored housing in Altoona, it was the resident PRR official who instigated company action on behalf of the city.

The CITY of ALTOONA now has a population of about 35,000, made up of EMPLOYEES and those indirectly dependent on our interests. As you know, it is closely built up, with no Public Square nor Park of any kind. Perhaps nothing would be of more value, or more appreciated by the community, than advantages of this kind.<sup>58</sup>

General Manager Pugh forwarded the request to President Roberts and by June 1892 the board of directors authorized the expenditure of \$5,000 for converting the property between Howard and Chestnut avenues at 7th Street. The grounds would be

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<sup>56</sup>Altoona Mirror (January 4, 1910), 9.

<sup>57</sup>"Locust Hills Is Fine New Suburb," Altoona Mirror (August 3, 1922).

<sup>58</sup>"Locust Hills," Altoona Mirror (August 3, 1922). F. L. Sheppard to Charles E. Pugh, December 29, 1891, Pa. State Archives, Harrisburg.



Fig. 212 Detail of Map of the City of Altona, 1870, Fairview Cemetery is in the upper right quadrant.

laid out in walks and beautified, and adapted to temporary use and purpose, of a park, at inconsiderable expense to the company, and thereby contribute, for the time being, to the pleasure and enjoyment of the citizens of the City of Altoona.<sup>59</sup>

The directors also approved plans for a second park on PRR property bordered by 4th and 5th avenues, Oak and Linden streets in Juniata. The general manager specified that the park should not be

turned over in any manner to the City . . . since the best citizens of the town other than our own people would very much prefer that it remain in our charge rather than that of the City as the park would be liable to misuse and the proper care would not be taken of the property for the reason that the necessary funds could not be obtained.<sup>60</sup>

The PRR's Altoona park property was adjacent to its Cricket Club and Field, formed in 1878 for upper level employees. In the early twentieth century the athletic field, with a stadium capacity of 32,000, became the site of championship playoffs for the PRR system athletic teams. The greenhouses supervised by the PRR's divisional head gardener were also located there.<sup>61</sup>

In 1893 the Altoona and Logan Valley Electric Railway (ALVERy) Company, hoping to capitalize on the need for a local recreation site, built Lakemont Park, a 100-acre amusement park on its line to Hollidaysburg.<sup>62</sup> It was about this time that a Progressive-spirited movement for local neighborhood playgrounds began in Altoona. A short-lived branch of the National Playground Association was established and several community organizations sponsored playgrounds and lobbied for municipal support of the movement. As a result of their efforts the city passed Ordinance 1606 in February 1906 establishing Prospect Hill Park. In the 1870s the site was occupied by a smallpox quarantine "pest house" and in the 1880s was quarried for street paving, then used as a public dump. Then just outside the city limits, it was "a favored resort for the rough and rowdy element of the town." A portion of Gospel Hill, in the vicinity of 14th Avenue and 14th Street, was designated as the second municipal park. By 1912 the city had established the position of commissioner of parks and recreation, but local initiative continued to play a more active role. In 1909 parents' associations at the Adams and Penn schools ran adjacent playgrounds. The Concordia Singing Society sponsored one on its grounds in Fairview, and the 16th Street Playground Association sponsored a field at 16th Street and 19th Avenue. These Altoona citizens were inspired by Progressive philosophy articulated in the Altoona Tribune in 1916:

In this industrial age, the playground is becoming as necessary a social-educational institution and adjunct to the public school as the school itself is necessarily a part of

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<sup>59</sup>PRR Directors' Minutes (1/27/1892): 97; (6/22/1892): 162; 16 (2/13/1901): 102.

<sup>60</sup>PRR Directors' Minutes 16 (9/24/1902): 481. Charles E. Pugh to G. B. Roberts, January 29, 1892.

<sup>61</sup>Davis, 132. Insurance Maps of Altoona, (New York: Sanborn Map Co.).

<sup>62</sup>Clark, Illustrated Altoona, 130.

the social fabric.<sup>63</sup>

If children were trained early to play well together, they would be more likely to work efficiently together as adults, an especially important consideration in the PRR shops where teams of men were assigned to construct and repair individual cars.

## Schools

PRR officials were certainly cognizant of the investment potential of education for their company. In 1905 the PRR donated \$18,000 to the Altoona School Board for equipping woodworking, forge and machine shops in the manual training department of a new high school. Graduates with high grades in the manual training classes were accepted as apprentices in the PRR shops at higher wages than their classmates.<sup>64</sup> The Altoona school system has enjoyed a good reputation for imparting an up-to-date, quality education to its students. This has been possible in part because of the PRR's sponsorship and contributions to the tax base. Otherwise the PRR's influence in the school system was felt more indirectly as its expansion determined the direction of residential development in the city and the subsequent building of new ward and neighborhood schools.

Until 1870 school construction was concentrated at two sites in the city--one on either side of the PRR tracks. The first construction supervised by the newly elected Altoona School Board was of a two-room school at 7th Avenue and 15th Street in the Fourth Ward in 1854. A west side school was built a year later at 14th Avenue and 13th Street. When Altoona incorporated as a city in 1868, the school district consisted of seven frame school buildings with ten rooms, nine teachers, and 550 students; overcrowding had reached a critical stage and during the next decade six identical, two-story, eight-room brick schools were built across the city. By 1902 each ward had at least one school. There was a total of seven buildings on the east side, five on the west, housing primarily grade school classes. The minority of students who continued their education into high school had no separate building until 1895 when Lincoln High School was opened in the Fourth Ward adjacent to the original 1854 site. Within ten years the school board was forced to commission a larger building designed for 800-900 students. An annex that increased the capacity to 2,500 was completed in 1929. The building then covered the entire Fourth Ward block between 5th and 6th avenues, 14th and 16th streets.<sup>65</sup>

The next stage of expansion also incorporated educational reforms through the introduction of the junior high school organization. Two new schools were built in the 1920s--again on either side of the tracks--Theodore Roosevelt Junior High on the east side and D. S.

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<sup>63</sup>Altoona Mirror (January 15, 1916), sec. 4, 7; "Mr. Taylor Plans Recreation Body," (January 9, 1929); "Council Creates City Park Board," (January 15, 1929). Anna Shaefer Leopold, "Smoky City: A Social Analysis of Unionism in a Railroad Town, 1945-1960" (Master's thesis, University of Chicago, 1962), 21.

<sup>64</sup>"Schools of City Had Lowly Start," Altoona Mirror (June 13, 1945).

<sup>65</sup>"Schools of City Had Lowly Start," Altoona Mirror (June 13, 1934). Clark, Illustrated Altoona, 75. Dr. Levi Gilbert, "Altoona's Educational History Has Been Marked by Countless Steps of Progress," Altoona Mirror, 13 June 1939. Altoona Charter Centennial Booklet.



Keith Junior High on the west.<sup>66</sup> In addition to improving the opportunity for and quality of education the junior highs served the more pragmatic purpose of relieving the continuing problem of overcrowding, exacerbated in the 1920s by annexed territories whose schools had to be integrated into a city-wide system.

### City Annexations

Small plots were annexed to the city over its history. The largest block, a 4.57-square-mile area, was annexed in January 1929. It included Wehnwood, Fairlawn, and Juniata to the north; the East End and Collinsville on the east; and the Logan Township developments of Locust Hills, Eldorado, Roselawn, South Altoona, Llyswen, Garden Heights, and Lakemont Terrace to the west and south. The annexation more than doubled the city's size and added 17,000 to its population.<sup>67</sup> Movements for annexation were usually started after it was clear that an area would be successfully developed and that its contribution to the tax base would offset the expense of providing it with city services. Community-based organizations of churches, schools, playgrounds, and volunteer fire companies indicated the success of developments and the solidification of neighborhoods, but the first step in this process was the establishment of individual households--the building and sale of houses.

### Housing and Residents

Despite the early difficulty of securing adequate housing, by the late nineteenth century, Altoona city boosters were bragging about its high degree of home-ownership. When he compiled the city directory for 1890, Charles B. Clark concluded that 3,392 families owned their own homes or were in the process of buying, while 3,305 were tenants, putting the home-ownership rate at just over 50 percent. Census reports that year (the first that home-ownership was reported) put the local figure at 45 percent, while the national rate was 47.8 percent. According to the census, home-ownership in Altoona approached 60 percent in 1930, but plummeted during the Depression. Since World War II, home-ownership in the city has ranged between 60 and 70 percent. Today it still runs above the national average--68 percent in 1980 compared to 64.7 percent nationwide.<sup>68</sup>

### Building and Loans

Altoonans financed their homes by forming building and loan associations with names like the Germania and the Workingman's Building and Loan that reflected the composition of their membership. New members were voted in at regular meetings, and each member paid a monthly fixed amount into a fund that became capital, which was then loaned out to finance housing construction. Although the first building and loan associations were "terminal," so that

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<sup>66</sup>"Schools of City Had Lowly Start," Altoona Mirror (June 13, 1934). Harry G. Good and James D. Teller, A History of American Education (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1973), ch. 8. Altoona Charter Centennial Booklet.

<sup>67</sup>"Altoona Doubles Original Area," Altoona Mirror (October 20, 1928). "Great Expansion Record Shown By City Since 1868," (June 13, 1939).

<sup>68</sup>Altoona (Chamber of Commerce, 1925). Baltimore American, (March 27, 1925). Clark, Clark's Directory (1890). Altoona Mirror (August 6, 1949). Facts About Altoona (Chamber of Commerce, 1948). U.S. Bureau of the Census.



they went out of business when the original loans had been paid, later associations were "serial," or self-perpetuating. The depression of 1873 reduced the capital available for investment for several years. Yet home-building continued in Altoona. One observer estimated that nine-tenths of the money loaned for home building at that time was from building and loan associations. In 1880, an observer noted that

evidence of the prosperity of the building and loan associations of Altoona are plainly visible. Buildings erected through their instrumentality are located, at short distances, all over the city.<sup>69</sup>

By 1900 there were thirty-seven building and loan associations operating in Altoona -- an astonishing number when compared to Johnstown, a similar-sized city just forty-five miles away, which had eight. The building and loan associations often assumed the role of banks, so much so that there were only four banks in Altoona at that time. At least one attorney in the city advertised himself as a "Building and Loan Expert." By 1925, Altoona had forty-four building and loan associations. During the Depression forty-seven of fifty building and loans were consolidated to form five state-chartered savings and loans.<sup>70</sup>

Chamber of Commerce and other promotional publications variously described Altoona either as "a city of homes" or as "a one-class city." In effect, the two titles connoted the same thing. The city's many building and loans were credited with earning it the first title; the organizers and members of the building and loans--the steady, middle-class workers who dominated the city's population--gave it the second. The work done in the PRR shops required an unusually large proportion of skilled employees including blacksmiths, boilermakers, car-builders, carpenters, machinists, pattern-makers, and upholsterers. These people displayed the initiative and thrift attributed to their class by building or purchasing their own homes, often through the aid of the building and loans. The four building and loan associations operating in 1870 were headed by two machinists, a pattern-maker, and an insurance man.<sup>71</sup> The streetscapes of Altoona's neighborhoods are the precipitate element in this inter-relation of people, work, and class.

## Housing

Claiming to have no lower class, Altoona also claimed to have no "lower class" housing. In 1939, the Altoona Mirror flatly denied that the city had any "tenement districts" or slums. Even apartment buildings were few, as the Chamber of Commerce declared in 1925, "the city is distinctly one of homes. There are comparatively few apartments in the city, the Altoona family apparently showing a strong preference for the individual home."<sup>72</sup> Conversely, the city was not

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<sup>69</sup>James H. Ewing and Harry Slep, History of the City of Altoona and Blair County (Altoona: Harry Slep's Mirror Printing House, 1880), 252, quoting Altoona Daily Sun, (July 26, 1880). W. Frank Vaughn, "The Building and Loan Associations," Altoona Mirror (January 15, 1916).

<sup>70</sup>R.L. Polk & Co., 1900 and 1925; Directory of the City of Johnstown (Johnstown: Frank D. Hoerle, 1901). Clark, Illustrated Altoona, 46. Facts About Altoona (Chamber of Commerce, 1948).

<sup>71</sup>Lant, 125.

<sup>72</sup>Altoona Mirror (June 13, 1939). Altoona (Chamber of Commerce, 1925), 18.

averse to admitting to a few "palatial" homes interspersed with the many modest and respectable ones. One source noted in 1896 that

about three-fourths of the buildings are frame, a few are stone, and the remainder are brick or brick cased; nearly all are neat and comfortable; many are more than this; while not a few are palatial in architectural design and finish, the home of wealth and refinement.

The residential streets in the original city display a stylistic variety of single-family houses, constructed on a one-by-one basis and suited to individual tastes. They are replete with ornamented porches and cornices, differing roof shapes, and a variety of materials. Brick for these structures was manufactured just outside city limits, and stone was quarried nearby. Lumber was brought in by rail, and by 1880 there were three planing mills.<sup>73</sup>

Only in slight contrast to these upper-middle-class houses were those owned by the larger skilled working class and described in 1911 as "mostly frame structures, built singly and in pairs, arranged so that light and air are abundant, and small garden plots are not infrequent."<sup>74</sup> Despite this optimistic description, much of Altoona's housing stock was built wall-to-wall in identical rows or sets of



Fig. 2.13 1411-19 12th St. at 15th Avenue.

combinations of a few types, indicating the activity of developers and their contractors (Figs. 2.13-15). These houses were popular with both individual home builders as well as purchasers. Their pervasiveness in the city is consistent with its reputation as a one-class city of middle-class, skilled workers. Economically these citizens found the houses affordable. And because they had enough stylistic details to be fashionable yet did not flaunt their individuality, they fit

<sup>73</sup>Clark, *Semi-Centennial*, 62-3. Sell, 285-6. Ewing and Slep, 251.

<sup>74</sup>Sell, 285-6.



Fig. 2.14 1513-23 2nd Ave., row of gambrel-front houses.



Fig. 2.15 1411, 1413, 1415 3rd Ave., row of cross-gable houses.

the aesthetic and social values of skilled workers aspiring to the middle class.

### Populace

The relative social and economic homogeneity of Altoona's population contributed to its sense of ethnic homogeneity. Compared to other industrial cities of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, Altoona had a small immigrant population. In 1870, Altoona's foreign-born population was 14 percent; in 1890, 10.2 percent; in 1900, 8.5 percent. This compares with Johnstown's rate of 20.3 percent in 1900. In 1910, Altoona had 5,212 foreign-born people (10 percent of its total), while Johnstown had 15,316 (27.6 percent).<sup>75</sup>

<sup>75</sup>U.S. Bureau of the Census.

The composition of Altoona's population was used as a selling point by contemporary promotional writers. "The undesirable foreign element," wrote Charles B. Clark in 1896, "so predominant in some cities, is almost entirely absent here. The citizens of foreign birth are mostly German and English, of the educated class, and are among the most respected."<sup>76</sup> A 1912 program to celebrate the Semi-Centennial of the Loyal War Governors Conference again noted that

a feature of the city's population is the almost entire absence of foreigners of the laboring class, very few of these being found here. This . . . adds greatly to the desirability of the city as a place of residence or a business location.

The same program lists performances by a German singing society, the Concordia, and the Altoona Turngemeinde, a German gymnastics club.<sup>77</sup>

Altoona did have a foreign-born population, but, especially in the nineteenth century, its socio-economic status and primarily German and Irish ethnicity allowed it to assimilate fairly easily with an older stock population of much the same composition. Many of those hired to work in the shops were from rural and small town Pennsylvania. Unlike industries that recruited unskilled labor in Europe, the PRR in Altoona sought a skilled work force and occasionally sent agents to Europe to recruit skilled labor.<sup>78</sup> In the nineteenth century, German and Irish names frequent the pages of the city directories and tax-assessment books. On an 1859 map, a neighborhood along 6th Avenue between 5th and 9th streets is called "Hibernia" after its Irish inhabitants.<sup>79</sup> An area called "Dutch Hill," named for its German (Deutsch) residents, was located on the East Side. By 1870, four of the fourteen churches in the city were distinctly German, one of the four building and loan associations was German, and a German-language newspaper was published weekly from 1878 to 1918.

By 1911 the population had become somewhat more diverse, but, as historian Jesse Sell explained, the established patterns continued:

All nationalities are represented in this great body of working men. Of the foreign elements the Italians lead in numbers, the Italian population of the city numbering about 5,000. There are large numbers of Germans and Irish; however, both of the latter named elements assimilate so rapidly that they soon lose their identity as foreigners. The so-called "foreigners" of the city are usually intelligent, largely due to the nature of their employment. Great numbers of them are skilled artisans in iron, steel, and wood working. This is especially true of the Germans. . . . Many who have been educated in great industrial schools found abroad are here employed.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>76</sup>Clark, *Semi-Centennial*, 64.

<sup>77</sup>*The Semi-Centennial Loyal War Governors Conference Official Guide* (September 24-26, 1912).

<sup>78</sup>PRR Directors' *Minutes* 4 (9/7/1864): 404-05.

<sup>79</sup>*Map of Blair County, Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia: Geil and Freed, 1859; 1983 reprint).

<sup>80</sup>Sell, 286.

Despite the desire to gloss the city into a safely homogenous whole, Altoonans were very much aware of discrepancies in styles and standards of living. As one resident put it, "Altoona was always ethnic and there was a tendency for one group to look down their nose at the next group."<sup>81</sup>

As Sell noted, the largest outgroup were the Italians who, like other twentieth-century immigrants, arrived in greatest numbers in the first two decades of the twentieth century. They settled on the East Side along the base of Prospect Hill, disturbing the contours of "Dutch Hill." One resident of the neighborhood remembered that his German grandparents moved up to Bell Avenue at the crest of Prospect Hill "because there were too many Italians moving into 5th Avenue--they didn't want to be surrounded." Eighth Avenue became the center of a Little Italy. The Altoona Diocese appointed an Italian priest for the immigrants in 1905. In 1911 they purchased a wood-frame store at the corner of 8th Avenue and 11th Street that they converted into a church and school. Construction of a new church for the parish, Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, was begun in 1912 and was finally completed in 1923. A number of Mt. Carmel parishioners settled about a mile to the northeast in Pleasant Valley, and in 1925, a chapel in the former Connellsville Township Elementary School was dedicated to spare residents the walk across the hill to 8th Avenue. In addition to supporting a new church, Altoona's Italian immigrants founded an Italian Bank and a number of social organizations. An Italian consulate serving immigrants in fourteen central Pennsylvania counties was established in Altoona in 1912.<sup>82</sup>

Altoona's black population was always small, but was long-established. The first family settled near Allegheny Furnace in 1834. In 1896 there were two black churches, African Methodist Episcopal and Mount Zion Second Baptist, but their combined membership was only one hundred. In 1925, one estimate was that there were 1,200 blacks in Altoona, but the same newspaper article noted that only fifty voted in the 1924 election. In 1925 only 5 percent owned their own homes; a newspaper noted, apparently without irony, that the building and loan associations were "generous in their treatment" of blacks. In March 1940, the Altoona Mirror reported that

the housing conditions of the Negroes here, as elsewhere, are far below the standard of average living. . . . Not being able to pay more for rent, they are forced to live under congested conditions . . . .

As a solution, the local Community Service Association advocated a federally-funded, low-rent housing project, for "raising of standards . . . is based entirely upon the change of environment and good homes in which to live." Today, Altoona's black population is still small, numbering about 810, or 1.4 percent of the total population.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>81</sup>Ted Holland, "Ethnogeography of a Railroad Town," (unpublished paper, 1988), 7.

<sup>82</sup>Holland, 3, 9. Our 75 Years Together: Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Parish and Franciscan Friars T.O.R. (Tappan, NY: Custombook Inc., 1985), 10-19. "Italian Bank to be Opened in Altoona," Altoona Mirror (May 3, 1920); "Italian-American Groups Aid in Advancement of Altoona," (August 12, 1949); "Count Ranuzzi Opens Consulate," (December 3, 1912).

<sup>83</sup>Altoona Tribune (January 15, 1916), sec. 2, 13. Clark, Illustrated Altoona, 86. Altoona Mirror, (May 27, 1925); "Living Standard of Negro is Low, Survey Reveals," (March 7, 1940); "Housing Project Would Provide Better Living," (March 20, 1940). U.S. Bureau of the Census.



Twentieth-century immigrants tended to move into unskilled PRR jobs. While city directories listed men with German or Anglo-Saxon surnames as sheet-metal workers or boilermakers, their Italian and East European neighbors appeared more often simply as laborers. East European immigrants settled southwest of the Loudonsville section of Altoona. An Orthodox church was established there by 1916 and St. Mary's Ukrainian Catholic Church was founded by 1920. Chinese immigrants formed an enclave in the Italian neighborhood. One resident remembered that

the Chinese kids would earn money going out and cleaning the stables, the horses that the Italians used to ply their wares. Some of them had jobs in the railroad simply taking care of the stock pens down by 4th Street. They did the lowliest jobs. The first generations of them [in Altoona] were railroad workers, track workers, but eventually they needed fewer and fewer of those as the Italians took over a lot of that work.

A small Mexican population arrived more recently as recruits to offset labor shortages during World War II. They lived in sections of Juniata and East Altoona. Most stayed only for a few years, until their jobs were reclaimed by returning G.I.s.<sup>84</sup>

### Labor

In a 1934 brochure, the Altoona Chamber of Commerce noted what it considered the most salable characteristics of the labor situation in the city:

Labor--Highly skilled, intelligent, industrious, loyal and thrifty. More than 90% native white. Unlimited supply available for employment--both male and female. Favorable Labor Conditions.<sup>85</sup>

It was not mere coincidence that the "favorable labor conditions," a euphemistic reference to the absence of a strong union movement in the city, occurred and were listed in conjunction with the attributes cited by earlier boosters. And just as there was another side to their portrayal and perception of Altoona as a one-class, city of homes, it was not true that Altoona's workers were universally content.

The city experienced its most pronounced labor conflict in 1877. Events in Altoona were part of a widespread strike sparked when the B&O and other railroads, including the PRR, reduced wages and cut the size of train crews in efforts to recover from the lingering effects of the 1873 depression. Freight crews at Pittsburgh struck on July 19 and were followed by fellow employees across the line. The protests in Pittsburgh, the center of 1877 strike activity, resulted in several million dollars in property damage. The Pennsylvania governor called out the state militia and two companies were stationed at Altoona, where "confusion reigned supreme." Strikers there took over the PRR complex and agreed "to protect private and public property"; they allowed passenger cars through but stopped all freight traffic. When trains carrying soldiers to quell the rioters at Pittsburgh began to pass through, several hundred

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<sup>84</sup>Holland, 7-8.

<sup>85</sup>Altoona, Pennsylvania Facts and Figures (Chamber of Commerce, 1934).

strikers gathered at the station and threw stones and taunts at the soldiers. Eventually some scuffled with the engineers who were ignoring the strike call to run the trains. The Altoona workers were able to stop at least one trainload on its way from Harrisburg. A witness remembered how

the strikers interposed themselves and mingled with the soldiers, finally taking their guns from them, and the strange sight was witnessed of soldiers and strikers marching about the town arm in arm.<sup>86</sup>

The mayor and leading citizens were not confident that the strikers would continue such pacific behavior. The mayor held a public meeting in the Opera House and was authorized to appoint 500 deputies to supplement the police force. On July 25 a grand jury at Hollidaysburg reported

that persons of the number of three or four have, in a tumultuous, disorderly, and riotous manner, with force, stopped the trains running on the Pennsylvania Railroad, and have by threats and violence prevented engineers, firemen, and brakemen from operating trains.

Yet the jury, perhaps betraying its sympathies or merely wanting to keep peace in the community, recommended that their inquiry be discontinued. As justification they pointed out that they could not personally substantiate the charges which were based on "rumor" and on "statements made in the public newspapers" and that "at present there is quiet and order at Altoona."<sup>87</sup>

Another contingent of militia succeeded in removing the strikers from their base at the PRR station on July 27. The strike was broken across the country by mid-August; its after-effects would be felt for years to come. Wages on the PRR were not restored to pre-strike levels until 1880. In January 1878 Altoona's Morning Tribune condemned the "unjust war on railroads," and placed its support with pro-business interests in the community. Workers' grievances, the paper argued, were "more fancied than real," for the PRR

has afforded employment and competence to many hundreds of mechanics and humble laboring men, and has paid them with a promptness unsurpassed by any railway in the world. Yet there are men who cannot regard it in any other light than a monster and a tyrant, a fit subject for pillage and arson, simply because it presupposes to know its own business better than its persecutors. Every effort made to crush, wrong or impede our railroad system is so much against the public welfare, commercially and industrially considered.<sup>88</sup>

As one of the first modern industrial corporations, the PRR initiated a system of management that established definite lines of authority and responsibility. This decentralized

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<sup>86</sup>Paige, 74-6. Davis, 257-58. Africa, 151. "Oldest Conductor is Robert H. Hamilton," Altoona Tribune, (January 15, 1916), sec. 6., 16.

<sup>87</sup>Davis, 257-58. Africa, 151.

<sup>88</sup>Davis, 257-58. Paige, 74-6. "Unjust War Upon Railroads," Altoona Morning Tribune (January 30, 1878), 2.

line-and-staff form of organization gave immense authority to the superintendents of each geographical division. The chief of motive power, stationed in Philadelphia, gave general direction and established standards, but did not supervise workers in the shops.<sup>89</sup> Upper-level managers in Altoona reported to two bosses, one related to the chief of motive power and one responsible for the divisions.<sup>90</sup> Before 1920, the superintendent of motive power was stationed in Altoona. During World War I, the U.S. government seized operations of all railroads; when the railroads were returned to private hands in 1920, the PRR reorganized. Most of the administrative personnel were transferred from Altoona. The Altoona shops then became a separate division under the chief of motive power and were supervised by a works manager.<sup>91</sup>

Within the shops, the foremen of each shop--the machine shop, the carpentry shop, the paint shops, and so on--reported to the master mechanic or master car builder. Each shop was arranged in departments, each with a foreman. Skilled workers (machinists, carpenters, painters, etc.) were organized in gangs; their foremen reported to the department foreman. Laborers were unskilled workers, and lower in status than the laborers were the janitors. In 1873, the piecework system--in which workers were paid by the job instead of the hour--was introduced in Altoona and gradually adapted throughout the shops; by the end of the century, nearly all Altoona workers were paid on this system.<sup>92</sup>

PRR employees assigned to various road crews organized unions or brotherhoods in Altoona in the 1880s. The Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen and the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen and Engineers both received local charters in September 1885. A Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers branch was formed in 1886. The Brotherhoods followed the nineteenth-century pattern of a kind of divisive unionization along craft lines rather than across them and while they did instigate strikes, made gains for their members, and provided beneficial and social organizations, by the early twentieth century, many viewed them as virtual company unions. The shops workers in Altoona remained unorganized until 1934 when they formed the Brotherhood of Railroad Shopcraftsmen of America in response to federal abolition of company unions. The members chose to keep their organization independent of the national union, a member of the American Federation of Labor.<sup>93</sup>

During World War I when the railroads were under government management, wage scales were increased and the eight-hour day was recognized. When the roads were returned to their companies in 1920, a Railroad Labor Board made up of company executives was

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<sup>89</sup>Stephen Salisbury, No Way to Run a Railroad: The Untold Story of the Penn Central Crisis (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1982), 12. Chandler, 105-06.

<sup>90</sup>The general superintendent of motive power reported to the chief of motive power and the general manager. The superintendent of motive power reported to both the general superintendent (of the divisions) and the general superintendent of motive power. The master mechanic or master car builder reported to the superintendent (of the divisions) and the superintendent of motive power. Watkins, 3:42.

<sup>91</sup>George H. Burgess and Miles C. Kennedy, Centennial History of the Pennsylvania Railroad Company, 1846-1946 (Philadelphia: The Pennsylvania Railroad Company, 1949), 567.

<sup>92</sup>Lloyd Murray, interviewed July 6, 1988. Africa, 182. Fred Pacifico, interviewed January 20, 1989. Watkins, 3:30, 42.

<sup>93</sup>Altoona Mirror (August 6, 1949), 3. Paige, 80-1. Wolf, 365-67.

appointed to mediate disputes and the incremental advances started during the war years were halted. Disputes over representation and pay reductions led to a national shopcrafts strike in 1922 but only a few men in Altoona went out. When the strike ended the national union was weakened; company unions were boosted, but were outlawed in 1934.<sup>94</sup>

During World War II, the Railroad Workers of America, Congress of Industrial Organizations began an aggressive organizing campaign in the PRR shops and called a representation election to challenge the shopcrafts Brotherhood. Shop workers across the system were broken down into eight crafts: carmen, machinists, electricians, blacksmiths, sheet-metal workers, powerhouse workers, boilermakers, and moulders. The CIO narrowly won the right to represent general laborers and three of the eight crafts. The AFL called its own challenge election in 1947 but was defeated, and in the subsequent run-off between the CIO and the Brotherhood, the CIO won six of eight shopcrafts. The AFL continued to campaign and won three crafts in a 1949 election. The two national unions ceased their competition when they agreed to merge in 1955.<sup>95</sup>

By World War II there was more sympathy for union organization among Altoona workers. The PRR began closing down its shops in the 1930s as the PRR experienced the same Depression-era losses as the rest of the country; downscaling continued in the 1940s as locomotive technology changed from steam to electric and diesel. The Altoona Mirror noted that so much of the shops closed "that not even the shop whistles were blown regularly." The shops payroll, which was nearly \$21 million in 1928, dropped to \$8.3 million in 1932 and \$6.4 million in 1938.<sup>96</sup>

### Decline

Despite some war-related work in the early 1940s, the PRR's decline in Altoona continued late into the decade. The last locomotive was constructed there in 1946; the PRR employed 11,939 workers in 1949, down from a peak of 15,000 in the 1920s. Although Altoona continued as a car and locomotive maintenance facility until the 1960s, the new diesel locomotives were estimated to require only 10 percent of the maintenance demanded by steam locomotives. In 1956, the PRR moved its car construction shops to Hollidaysburg, followed later by its car repair shops.<sup>97</sup> Today, the Juniata shops remain the railroad's (now Conrail's) principal locomotive-repair facility.

As the PRR declined so did the city of Altoona. During the Depression, five of Altoona's eight banks closed, and most of the building and loan associations went out of business. Mortgages on 2,000 houses were foreclosed, further depressing the real estate market.

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<sup>94</sup>Anna Shaefer Leopold, "Smoky City," 45-49. Paige, 80-1.

<sup>95</sup>Leopold, "Smoky City," 54-73.

<sup>96</sup>Altoona Mirror (August 6, 1949). Paige, 81.

<sup>97</sup>Peter H. Stott, "Pennsylvania Railroad Shops," in "Survey of Historic Structures in Blair and Cambria Counties, Pennsylvania," (Historic American Engineering Record, U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1987) draft typescript, 6. Paige, 35-6, 82. The Altoona Story of Industrial Development (Chamber of Commerce, 1956).

The responsibilities assumed with the January 1929 annexation of a 4.57-square-mile area around the city would have strained city resources even without the Depression. The new neighborhoods included large areas without adequate sanitary sewage facilities and added miles of unpaved streets. Police and fire departments had to be enlarged and a private water company was purchased to supplement city reservoirs.<sup>98</sup>

The Chamber of Commerce, first organized in 1887 as the Altoona Board of Trade, tried to offset the loss of the PRR's support by attracting new business to the city. One of the earliest efforts at economic diversification resulted in the opening of the Schwarzenbach-Huber Company's silk mill in 1889 at 25th Street and 8th Avenue. By 1916 it employed 875 and a second mill in Juniata employed 300. This enterprise was chosen in part because it employed mostly women, providing jobs for PRR workers' wives and daughters but posing no threat to the PRR's monopoly on the male labor pool. During the flusher times of the 1920s, the Chamber of Commerce turned away businesses rather than have them challenge PRR entrenchment. When World War II failed to revitalize the railroad industry, however, community leaders made more concerted efforts to bring other industry to Altoona. A Sylvania Electric plant and a new veterans hospital were established during the war. In 1949 the Chamber of Commerce formed Altoona Enterprises, Inc. Local businesses purchased stock or made donations to the organization which then used the money to help finance start-up costs of new businesses. The Butterick Pattern Plant at 30th Street and Beale Avenue was one of the largest companies attracted under the plan. In 1951 Altoona Enterprises sold a new factory building at cost to SKF Industries, a ball-bearing manufacturer. A second fund-raising drive, the Altoona Industrial Payroll Insurance Plan, was initiated in 1950. Using the slogan "Jobs for Joes," organizers solicited pledges from businesses and individuals. By 1965 it was reported that the campaigns had attracted thirty new and expanded industries and 12,200 jobs.<sup>99</sup>

Yet as late as 1958 unemployment was as high as 15 percent. By 1961 the PRR "barely provided jobs for 6,500 people"--"barely" because much of this employment was part-time with periods of work alternating with prolonged lay-offs. Between union lobbying to save jobs and maintain standards of living and railroad maneuvering to offset labor and maintenance costs, railroad wages were tripled and employment cut in half in the fifteen years after World War II. Altoona's population began to reflect the job outlook; it declined steadily and became older as young adults moved away. In the early 1960s, enough residents had ties with the retirement community of St. Petersburg, Florida, that the Altoona Mirror published a weekly column reporting on Altoonans' activities there. PRR employees with enough seniority to count on being called back from furloughs made accommodations to the erratic work schedules because of the high wages and the prestige and family tradition of working for the railroad.<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>98</sup>Nancy S. Shedd, "First National Bank of Altoona" (typescript, n.d.), 17-18. Altoona Mirror (August 6, 1949), 22.

<sup>99</sup>Leopold, "Smoky City," 16-20. "Altoona's Angle," Business Week (June 4, 1949), 76-82. "One City's War on Poverty," Senior Scholastic 87 (December 9, 1965): 21.

<sup>100</sup>"One City's War on Poverty," 21. Leopold, "Smoky City," 107-112.



## COMMERCIAL CENTER

by Nancy Spiegel

*... when it first became a town ... [Altoona] had no attractions. Churches, schools, places of amusement, and the hundred other conveniences essential to humanity, all had to be built up. But progress was the watchword. Individuals became inspired by the energy of the company, and the natural consequence was that Altoona assumed an aspect of comfort and thrift in a period of time that would do credit to the wonderful cities of the West.<sup>1</sup>*

Altoona's commercial center, which extends from 11th to 16th streets, and 10th to 13th avenues, includes the west side of the original town of Altoona, as it was plotted from David Robeson's farm. In the 1850s, the commercial center comprised no more than a cluster of frame commercial shops along 10th Avenue (Main Street), which followed the main line of the railroad. The shops were "dirty, disagreeable and ragged;" the streets "abounded in mud of the most tenacious kind." By the 1890s, however, observers could marvel at the unexpected "surprise" of Altoona's rapid growth into a "phenomenal metropolis." And by 1930, the downtown had grown to include a new shopping district, fine financial and theater districts, seven major churches and the center of municipal government.<sup>2</sup>

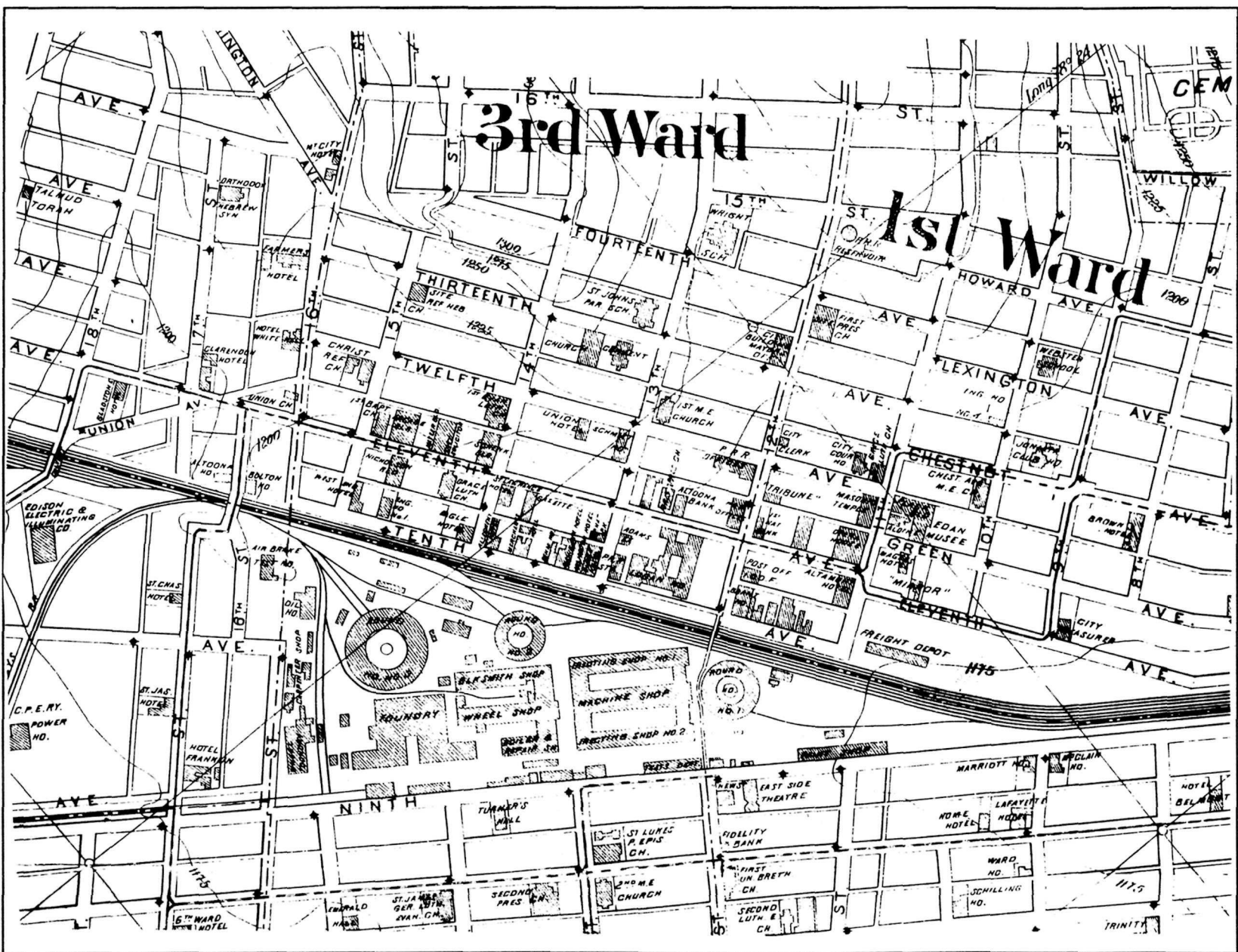
The development of the commercial district can be divided into four major phases of building activity. Early development (1850-80) was characterized by the predominance of frame shops and low, brick buildings; the 1890s witnessed the first building boom, with a reorientation of the commercial district toward 11th Street. Two later cycles of rebuilding, in 1900-10, and 1920-30, clearly transformed the scale of the commercial district, introducing new building types and a variety of architectural styles. The largest percentage of the present building stock dates from the 1920s.

While the designs of many of the small commercial buildings remain unattributed, most of the large structures were designed by a community of local architects; office buildings, theaters, and ecclesiastical buildings are perhaps the most significant exceptions, often the work of out-of-towners. Regardless of the circumstances of their design, however, the buildings of the commercial district invariably reflect the dominant architectural trends of each period, rather than strictly indigenous or local influences.

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<sup>1</sup>William B. Sipes, The Pennsylvania Railroad: Its Origin, Construction, Condition, and Connections (Philadelphia: The Passenger Department, 1875), 139.

<sup>2</sup>Sipes, 139. See Samuel T. Wiley and W. Scott Garner, Biographical and Portrait Cyclopedia of Blair County, Pennsylvania (Philadelphia: Gresham Publishing Co., 1892), 130, for the development of the downtown in the 1890s. On the 1920s, see "Great Sum Spent on New Buildings," Altoona Mirror (April 28, 1925); "Altoona's Stores Very High Class," and "Buildings Show City's Progress," Altoona Mirror (April 14, 1926). Chamber of Commerce, "Altoona Progress Week--Suggestions to Speakers and Altoona Progress Facts," typescript, 1927, contrasts nineteenth-century 11th Avenue with its present state.



**Early Commercial Development, 1850s-1880s**

The borough of Altoona, as laid out in 1849 by John Wright, had no provision for a park or other central, public space. Hence it was the Pennsylvania Railroad Company (PRR), and not a public square or market, which focused and shaped Altoona as it grew. The location of railroad shops just east of 10th Avenue, and the location of the railroad's passenger station, ticket office, and luxury hotel on 10th Avenue in the 1850s, exerted a powerful influence over the way the downtown would evolve. The retail district grew up around these buildings, since the railroad business guaranteed a certain amount of traffic for other commercial enterprises locating in the area.

Despite this influence on the development of the entire commercial district, the PRR's physical presence was confined to two rectangular blocks. The first block, which extended from 11th to 12th avenues and 12th to 13th streets, was bisected by a 15'-wide alley running parallel to the avenues. In 1851-52 the railroad erected a brick building to house its administrative offices on the northwest corner of 11th Avenue and 12th Street. A second office building was constructed on the northwest corner of 12th Avenue and 12th Street in 1863; this U-shaped, brick structure is altered but extant. The chief engineer and division superintendent shared a three-story, Italianate, brick double house, constructed in 1859 at 1210-12 11th Ave.; in 1870 this house became the residence of the railroad's general superintendent and the superintendent of motive power.

By 1890, the PRR properties also included two frame double houses at 1213-15 and 1215-17 12th Ave., which were occupied by clerks.<sup>3</sup> Other high-ranking railroad officials lived in the same block of 12th Avenue, in single-family houses that they owned: John P. Levan, general foreman of the Altoona Car Shops, at No. 1223; W. F. Taylor, chief telegraph operator, Altoona Division, at No. 1225; and B. C. Custer, chief clerk of motive power, at No. 1227.<sup>4</sup> With the exception of the Levan House, which survived as the Red Cross headquarters through the 1960s, these dwellings were replaced by commercial development in the two first decades of the twentieth century.

The second block, between 10th and 12th avenues and 12th to 13th streets, consisted of the Logan House Hotel complex, which included the railroad's ticket office and passenger station on 10th Avenue. The oldest and most distinguished hotel in town, the four-story brick Logan House was heralded as a luxury hotel when it was constructed by the PRR in 1855. By the late 1910s, however, the hotel was considered less than first class because it lacked the conveniences of modern plumbing; it was finally demolished in 1931 to make way for the new U.S. post office. Shortly after completion of the Logan House, smaller hotels--at first frame, and later brick--were built on 10th Avenue to answer rail passengers' additional needs for overnight accommodations. There were seven such hotels in 1882, eighteen in 1894, and nearly

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<sup>3</sup>Tax assessments for 1890.

<sup>4</sup>Map of the City of Altoona, Blair County, Pennsylvania (Philadelphia: H. E. Kaufman, 1882). City directories.

thirty by 1900.<sup>5</sup> In the early years of the twentieth century, this area--with its proximity to the railroad shops--had developed into a tavern and saloon district.

To encourage the growth of residential neighborhoods on the west side of town, John Wright donated several lots to fledgling Protestant congregations. The First Presbyterian Church, which originally located on the corner of 12th Avenue and 13th Street, and the First Evangelical Lutheran Church\*, founded at 1409-11 11th Ave., received lots from Wright for \$100 each, in 1851 and 1852, respectively; the First Methodist Episcopal Church\* (Wright's own congregation) obtained a desirable 100' x 120' corner lot for \$100 in 1858.<sup>6</sup> Their first buildings, erected in the 1850s, were typically one-story wood structures. In response to increasing membership during a period of religious enthusiasm, most of these were replaced in the 1870s by red-brick, Gothic Revival-style buildings with wood or brick steeples and Gothic-arched windows.

When first developed, the commercial center had mostly one- and two-story wood buildings, but these were gradually replaced by brick. In 1869 the city council passed an ordinance prohibiting the construction of wood buildings in specific blocks of the business district.<sup>7</sup> Thereafter, new buildings tended to be brick, two or three stories in height, residential in scale but commercial in use. The Jaggard Building\* at 1300 11th Ave. is the last example of this type to survive. Constructed ca. 1873-76 to house a dry goods store, the building was attached to a row of contiguous, three-story brick stores and offices that have since been demolished.<sup>8</sup> The last frame house remained on 11th Avenue until 1922, when it was razed to make way for S. G. Kress Company's novelty store.<sup>9</sup> The Kress Building still stands at No. 1406-08, but has been altered with a bricked-in storefront.

### **"Rapid and Substantial Growth," The 1890s**

As early as the 1870s, 11th Avenue had emerged as the major business thoroughfare. By 1896, it was described as "the great commercial and mercantile center, where real estate rents are highest. Here are the banks, newspapers, post office, and great dry goods stores, with

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\*An asterisk following a building name or address indicates that illustrations and more detailed information on the building can be found in its HABS Report in Appendix A. Reports are or organized alphabetically by street name or number.

<sup>5</sup>Map of the City of Altoona, Blair County, Pennsylvania (Philadelphia: H. E. Kaufman, 1882). Insurance Maps of Altoona, Pennsylvania (New York: Sanborn-Perris Co., 1894). City directory for 1900.

<sup>6</sup>Charles B. Clark, Illustrated Altoona (Altoona: Privately printed, 1896), 80. Richard Beeler, A History of the First Evangelical Lutheran Church of Altoona, Pennsylvania (Altoona: Privately printed, 1955), 14. The Lutherans actually purchased two contiguous lots measuring 100' x 110' for a total of \$300. Deed books: 80/42 (First Evangelical Lutheran Church) and K/364 (First Methodist Episcopal Church).

<sup>7</sup>William Donald Lingenfelter, "A Civil History of the Early Development of the City of Altoona," (Master's thesis, Pennsylvania State University, 1936), 2.

<sup>8</sup>Clement Jaggard's tax assessments for 1890. Altoona, Pennsylvania (New York: Sanborn Map and Publishing Co., Ltd., 1888).

<sup>9</sup>"Landmark, Built in 1851, is Razed," Altoona Mirror (April 6, 1922). The dwelling, known as the Jones property, was believed to be the third house built on 11th Avenue. It was constructed by John Wesley of Collinsville for Enos Jones, a pioneer resident of Altoona.

the passenger station but one square distant."<sup>10</sup> As evidence of its prominence, the street itself received special attention. Eleventh Avenue was one of the first streets to be macadamized, in 1873, and paved with asphalt blocks, in 1889; it also received the city's first trolley tracks, in 1882.

During the prosperity of the 1890s a new building type was introduced to the downtown streetscape: the large, red-brick commercial block, which dominated the city's commercial architecture during the early years of the twentieth century. Between 1890 and 1900, more than fifteen such buildings were constructed, dramatic evidence of how the shopping district, and the downtown in general, were growing during the period (Fig. 3.1). The Casanave Building\* at 1211-15 11th St., completed in 1894 for harness manufacturer Germaine Casanave, and the Masonic Temple\*, designed by James Windrim of Philadelphia in 1898, are two of the few standing reminders of this nineteenth-century building type. Typically these buildings had flat wall surfaces with little surface ornamentation; the Masonic Temple's use of rusticated stone piers, molded brick bands, and tourelles mark it as the most elaborate example in the commercial district.

The first substantial, downtown business block was the 11th Avenue Opera House, constructed as a market in 1868 but destroyed by fire in 1907 (Fig. 3.2). In 1889 Charles Rouss of New York City remodeled the entire building, establishing an opera house and theater on the upper floors. The Baltzell Brothers founded Altoona's first department



Fig. 3.2 Opera House Block, 12th Street and 11th Avenue, *Art Work of Blair County* (1893).

store on the first floor in the 1880s.<sup>11</sup> The Mateer Block at 1412 11th Ave. (Louis and Michael Beezer, architects; built 1894; partly rebuilt, 1908), and Woodcock's Arcade (built 1887), on the corner of 11th Avenue and 14th Street, are classic examples that no longer survive, as is the Nicholson Block (Charles Robinson, architect; built 1893), long noted for its

<sup>10</sup> Charles B. Clark, *Semi-Centennial of Blair County* (Altoona: Privately Printed, 1896), 62.

<sup>11</sup> Eleanor Wilson Maurer, "The Theatre," in *Blair County's First Hundred Years, 1846-1946*, George A. Wolf, ed. (Hollidaysburg, Pennsylvania: The Blair County Historical Society, 1946), 290.



ashlar facade.<sup>12</sup> Like the Casanave Building, these structures housed stores on the first floor and offices on the second (and third, if a four-story building). The top floor typically contained a large room that was either used as a stockroom or rented as a meeting hall to various organizations.

A second concentration of brick business blocks appeared on both sides of 11th Street, between 10th and 13th avenues. Revolving around the Opera House, this area rapidly developed into Altoona's first theater district. In 1887 Louis Plack built the Mountain City Theatre, a four-story brick building, on the corner of 11th Street and 12th Avenue; it burned in 1889 and was rebuilt as the Phoenix Block, an office building. In



Fig. 3.3 George Rudisill House, 1111 12th Ave., now surrounded by parking lots. The Silverman Building and the Hutchison Block are on the right.

1906 the building was converted back into a theater and reopened as the Lyric, managed by the Keith Vaudeville Company. Destroyed by fire in 1907, the theater was again rebuilt and subsequently named the Embassy, Penn, and Orpheum.<sup>13</sup> A second theater and museum, the Eden Musee and Family Theater, opened behind the Phoenix Block in 1892. This type of entertainment was described as "popular with the large class that cannot afford to patronize the higher priced opera house."<sup>14</sup> It was soon superseded by Altoona's first nickelodeons, introduced in 1905. The Musee was converted to a garage, and demolished in 1951, along with the Orpheum Theatre, to make way for a parking lot.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>12</sup>Clark, *Illustrated Altoona*, 44-45.

<sup>13</sup>Maurer, "The Theatre," 290-1.

<sup>14</sup>Clark, *Illustrated Altoona*, 129.

<sup>15</sup>"Workers Begin Razing Old Parking Garage," *Altoona Mirror* (June 5, 1951); "Razing Old Structure," *Altoona Mirror* (June 6, 1951).

In contrast to the rapid development of 11th Avenue and 11th Street, 12th and 13th avenues remained almost entirely residential in character until after 1905. Charles Clark, in his Semi-Centennial History of 1896, listed 12th Avenue between 11th and 16th streets as "one of the most desirable residence locations" in Altoona.<sup>16</sup> The substantial, brick-veneered homes in the 1100 and 1200 blocks of these streets were built at this time; some, such as the Germaine Casanave House at 1105 13th Ave., were eventually demolished to make way for parking lots. Others, including George Rudisill's house at 1111 12th Ave. (Fig. 3.3), designed by Louis and Michael Beezer ca. 1895, and the four unattributed houses at 1106-12 13th Ave. (all stylistically related to examples by Robinson and the Beezer Brothers), have been converted to offices and stores without harm to their architectural integrity. These houses--which feature basement kitchens once staffed by cooks, and intact carriage houses--are the last standing reminders of what was once an exclusive, residential neighborhood.

### **Commercial Development, ca. 1900-10**

This third phase of architectural development was the indirect result of the PRR's expansion of its shops, which led to a dramatic rise in Altoona's population--from 38,000 in 1900 to 52,000 in 1910. Commercial development during this period was characterized by the introduction of taller buildings and new building types, the designs of professionally trained architects.

Building types that illustrate the new scale of the downtown area are the office building and department store. The Altoona Trust Building\* on the northeast corner of 12th Street and 12th Avenue, designed by Mowbray and Uffinger of New York in 1901, was the first Classical Revival-style building in downtown Altoona. The U-shaped, five-story office building introduced new materials--gray brick, limestone, and terra cotta--to the predominately red-brick cityscape, and it was the first downtown structure to boast an electric elevator. Robinson and Winkler's Central Trust Building\* of 1906, and Rothert's furniture store, a six-story, gray-brick building, the work of Shollar and Hersch in 1906 (rebuilt 1906; substantially altered 1988), are also excellent examples of this trend.

Although the more flamboyant Renaissance-derived styles did not flourish in Altoona's commercial district, there is one fine example of the Beaux Arts Baroque. The Mishler Theatre\*, designed by Albert Westover of Philadelphia in 1906 (and rebuilt after a fire that same year) features exuberant surface ornamentation and an opulent interior executed in marble, plasterwork, and painted decoration. Celebrated for hosting performances by John Philip Sousa, Lillian Russell, Al Jolsen, and Helen Hayes, among many others, the playhouse brought large crowds of theatergoers downtown for its evening productions. The Mishler was the first of many commercial enterprises built in 12th Avenue's exclusive, residential district.

Eleventh Avenue continued as the main retail street, drawing large crowds of shoppers and hosting grand celebrations and community events. There were three department stores; the William F. Gable and Company's "Great Daylight Store" was the largest, expanding over time to include nearly half of the 1300 block and a second building at the corner of 12th

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<sup>16</sup>Clark, Semi-Centennial, 62-3.

Avenue and 14th Street. Eleventh Avenue had also become the place for professional men to locate: in 1900, every one of Altoona's lawyers, and many of the city's doctors and dentists, had offices there. In contrast, midwives continued to serve communities of women from their own homes--particularly in the Second and Fourth wards--well into the 1930s.<sup>17</sup>

The decade of the 1900s also witnessed the rebuilding of downtown churches. Stone was a fairly rare material in Altoona, thus most of the commercial buildings were brick, which was locally available. When rebuilding a structure as permanent and prized as a church, however, many congregations selected stone. The First Methodist Episcopal Church\* replaced its old building with a magnificent brownstone church and attached rectory, designed by M. R. Brown of New York in 1905-07. The First Evangelical Lutheran Church\* and the Hebrew Reform Temple\* (Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church since 1924) turned to architect Charles M. Robinson of Altoona for their new buildings, both of rough-faced, random ashlar limestone. While the Lutheran congregation chose a traditional, Gothic Revival style building, the Mountain City Hebrew Reform Congregation commissioned an exotic Moorish structure with onion domes and horseshoe-arched openings. Christ Reformed Church\* and parsonage (now First United Church of Christ) were designed in 1902 by Robinson's protegee, Frederic J. Shollar. Among this church's more interesting, eclectic features are a tower with belfry, crowned by four small onion domes, and several Gothic-arched windows with tracery.

In contrast, the First Baptist Church erected the only Neoclassical church and rectory downtown, in 1912-14. The two-story building, which features a tetrastyle Ionic portico, was executed in buff brick with white, glazed terra cotta trim. A second exception to the dark stone churches of the commercial district is the Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament\*, a landmark on the Altoona skyline. Designed by George Lovett of Philadelphia in 1924, the church's steel frame is clad in smooth-faced, light-colored limestone. Although several auxiliary buildings were demolished when the cathedral was built, St. John's School, dating from the 1880s, survives across the street. A brick Tudor-styled convent was constructed next door to the school in 1924, completing a visually varied cathedral complex.

Fraternal lodges were another building type that located in the commercial center during the 1900s. The Shriner's auditorium, the Jaffa Mosque, lies outside of the project area on Broad Avenue, but six other lodges do survive downtown. The number of extant lodges only hints at the total number of fraternal organizations and secret societies that have flourished in Altoona: twenty-one in 1870, fifty-four in 1896, and more than 100 in the 1920s.<sup>18</sup>

Two of the most prominent organizations constructed lodges during the period. In 1907, the Elks, who had previously rented the fourth floor of the Nicholson Building, erected a four-story, brick-veneered structure with Neoclassical trim on 12th Street. In 1912-13, the Eagles built an unusual brownstone-faced building, which featured Altoona's first rooftop garden. The dedication of the Eagles Building\* (1106 12th Ave.), May 29-31, 1913, was enough of a historical event to receive front-page coverage in both of Altoona's daily newspapers for

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<sup>17</sup>City directories, 1900-35, *passim*.

<sup>18</sup>J. H. Lant, *Blair County Directory for 1870-71* (Altoona: Advance News Co., 1870), 122. R. L. Polk and Co., *R. L. Polk and Co.'s Altoona Directory* (Pittsburgh: R. L. Polk and Co., 1896).

three consecutive days. The building was the design of one of the city's most prolific architects, D. George Puderbaugh, who designed a number of Altoona's landmark buildings.<sup>19</sup> Other fraternal lodges include the Knights of Columbus Building (1925-26), also designed by Puderbaugh, and the American Legion Building of 1928 (now the Irish American Club), whose scrolled, pedimented doorway and stone quoins point to a Colonial Revival influence.

### 1920s Building Boom: Diversification and Progress

The decade of the 1920s had the most dramatic impact on the architecture of the commercial center, witnessing a building boom that surpassed all earlier construction activity. According to statistics compiled by the Altoona Mirror in the 1920s, building expenditures rose dramatically from 1900 to 1925. By the peak year 1924, more than \$3 million had been spent on citywide, commercial building projects. By 1927, the chamber of commerce could boast of a downtown "practically rebuilt anew."<sup>20</sup>

One of the decade's most interesting architectural developments was the takeover by local interests of the 1200 block of 11th Avenue. Most of this block had been owned by the PRR since Altoona's founding. In the early 1920s, however, its landmark buildings were sold when the PRR reorganized and moved its administrative offices to Philadelphia and Harrisburg. Over a five-year period, the block was transformed from a collection of red-brick railroad buildings, which were residential in scale, to a row of five-story commercial structures in a variety of architectural styles.

In 1922, real estate entrepreneurs Jacob and Isaac Silverman purchased the former PRR administrative building on the corner of 11th Avenue and 12th Street for \$240,000--at the time the most expensive real estate transaction in Blair County.<sup>21</sup> They commissioned a Neoclassical-style building with white, glazed terra cotta facades; the building (Silverman Building\*, 1200-04 11th Ave.) was never occupied as the intended department store, but sold to Penn Central Power and Light Company in 1926. Perhaps the most sophisticated design in the commercial district, the First National Bank\* was described as a "magnificent temple of finance" when it opened in 1924. The design of John Dempwolf of York, Pennsylvania, the monumental, Neoclassical bank incorporated stained-glass skylights and a variety of marble finishes on the interior. Next door to the bank, Jacob Brett chose a more "modern" idiom for his new department store. The Brett Building\*, designed by Julian Millard of Altoona in 1922, is the only downtown building to exhibit the architectural characteristics of the Chicago style--sharp, geometric surfaces, stylized pilasters, and low-relief terra cotta ornament. These three buildings, together with the Central Trust Company Building, create one of the finest, most unified streetscapes in the commercial district (Fig. 3.4).

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<sup>19</sup>The Italian Renaissance-style Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church (1912) and the parallelogram-shaped Brotherhood of Railway Trainmen's Hall (1914) on 8th Avenue are among his most prestigious commissions. For a checklist of Puderbaugh's extant architectural drawings, see "A List of Drawings of the late D. George Puderbaugh, Architect," typescript, compiled by James S. Kasun, Altoona Pennsylvania, n. d.

<sup>20</sup>"Buildings Show City's Progress," Altoona Mirror, 14 April 1926.

<sup>21</sup>Deed books: 349/251, 346/261. See also "Silverman Block Almost Finished," Altoona Mirror (June 8, 1925); "Penn Central to Get New Building," Altoona Mirror (June 1, 1926); and "Deal Closed on Silverman Building," Altoona Mirror (July 1, 1926).



Fig. 3.4 Northwest side of 1200 block of 11th Ave., (l-r) Central Trust Building, Brett Building, First National Bank Building, Silverman Building. U.S. Post Office, opposite.

Other buildings embody the public-spiritedness and civic pride of the 1920s. In 1924, Altoona received a much-needed City Hall\*, designed by the local architectural firm Hersh and Shollar. The structure was in the monumental, Beaux Arts style befitting a civic building of the progressive era. However, it also continued to incorporate various municipal functions under one roof, as had the old building, in contrast

to the nationwide trend toward more specialized structures for each branch of local government.<sup>22</sup> The largest building in the commercial center, the Penn Alto Hotel\*, was a successful project of the chamber of commerce, which saw the need for a convention-type hotel; its construction was financed by the issuance of bonds. Lists of original subscribers in the hotel's archives reveal that local businessmen and bank officials were the project's primary investors: I. C. Mishler of the Mishler Theatre, the Silverman brothers, and Jacob Brett were among the largest contributors, but numerous smaller investors also participated in the building campaign.

Altoonans were encouraged to support the hotel's construction by a series of fascinating promotional advertisements appearing in the Tribune and Mirror. Some of these appealed to the ideals of cooperation and loyalty, civic pride, and civic duty; others attempted to demonstrate that Altoona's future rested in the hands of its citizens (as opposed to the Pennsylvania Railroad Company--although this was never stated explicitly), invoking such words of wisdom from Ben Franklin as, "Citizens of Altoona, we must all hang together, or assuredly, we will hang separately."<sup>23</sup>

<sup>22</sup>William L. Lebovich, America's City Halls (Washington, D.C.: The Preservation Press, 1984), 24-30.

<sup>23</sup>These advertisements are collected in five scrapbooks of material relating to the construction of the hotel. Penn Alto Hotel Archives, Altoona.



The dramatic changes of the 1920s also included a shift in the size and location of the theater district. By the 1920s there were seven theaters in the commercial district, four on 11th Avenue. The Orpheum and the Mishler featured live shows and motion pictures; the Strand, Colonial and others offered only movies. In addition to the theaters, a new retail district, rivaled "only in a few large metropolitan cities," brought shoppers downtown.<sup>24</sup>

The majority of the new retail buildings were three stories tall, with brick bearing walls and large windows, designed to illuminate the interiors of the upper stories with natural light. The roofs were flat, or at least obscured by parapet walls; ornament--often stone, concrete or glazed terra cotta--was applied to the facade. Some of these buildings housed national chain stores: S. H. Kress and Company, Montgomery Ward, J. C. Penney, and McCrory's were only some of the many department stores located on 11th Avenue from the 1920s to the 1960s. Woolworth's, at Nos. 1312-16 is the only one that remains in business today. Others structures housed local businesses: William F. Seller's jewelry store, for example, was located at No. 1408-10, on a site that had been in the family since 1852.

Although comparatively little building activity occurred in Altoona in the 1930s, that decade's streamlined architecture is represented by two downtown structures. The monumental, Neoclassical U.S. Post Office\*, constructed on the site of the Logan House Hotel in 1931, exhibits the flat ornamentation and hard-edged, geometric lines of the Art Deco style. The McCrory's building at 1306 11th Ave. is a fine example of the Art Moderne style. Constructed in 1937, the building has a concrete exterior with a stepped parapet and flat, streamlined pilasters.

Some commercial buildings have been demolished in the recent era of unrestrained urban renewal; the downtown streetscape now has many gaps where a dense and vital shopping district once flourished. The current appearance of Gable's Department Store, with its monolithic brick facade of 1970-71, represents a second major problem of the 11th Avenue streetscape. Many of the facades of the smaller buildings have been refaced in an attempt at modernization. On most of the older buildings, only the upper stories are clearly defined; the windows promise life within, and an ornamental cornice or parapet often bears the name of the original owner. In at least ten cases, these upper stories have been obscured by the application of a blank, modern facade, thus destroying the building's liveliness as well as its historical associations.

Altoona has a rich and diverse architectural heritage, and much of it remains intact. Although most of the theaters are gone--victims of television and suburban mall development--the downtown churches, financial institutions, government buildings, and retail businesses continue to serve the needs of the city, as do the fraternal lodges. In the future, in addition to raising the community's awareness of its valuable historic resources, new efforts should focus on the preservation and the adaptive reuse of existing structures to bring more people back to the downtown.

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<sup>24</sup>"Altoona's Stores Very High Class," Altoona Mirror (April 14, 1926).



Fig. 4.1 Detail of First Ward Project Area showing owners and "footprints" of buildings on each lot. Map of the City of Altoona, Blair County, Pennsylvania, 1882.

FIRST WARD

by Alison K. Hoagland

*Altoona is a city of workers, where there is neither the very rich nor the very poor; a city of homes and home owners; a city of railroad shops, and rolling stock and motive power. . . .*<sup>1</sup>

When Archibald Wright bought David Robeson's farm and began laying out lots in 1851, Andrew Green, who owned the adjacent farm, followed suit. Green's land lay between the present 7th and 11th streets, on both sides of the railroad tracks. The new town of Greensburg became the neighborhood of clerks working in the commercial center and of skilled workers employed at the shops. Large houses were constructed for successful merchants who formed the upper class, but most of the residences here were on a more modest scale. Single-family houses, set closely together, usually wood frame, constitute the fabric of the neighborhood.

Green, who had inherited 100 acres from his father-in-law, Michael Grazier, in 1851, subdivided his lands in a grid system, although the streets did not coincide with those on the Robeson land (Fig. 4.1). Green also introduced two diamonds into the plan, one that still exists at 9th and Chestnut streets, and one at 9th Street and 7th Avenue, which was soon forgotten. Following a Philadelphia precedent, the diamond is a public square where four streets intersect the middle of the square's sides. Usually intended as a public market space, the diamond at 9th and Chestnut may have served that purpose. In 1869, however, a formal market house was established at the corner of 11th Avenue and 11th Street.<sup>2</sup>

After plotting the land, Green sold seventy-five acres of it in 1854 to Robert H. McCormick. Green retained the parcel closest to the railroad tracks, which included both sides of 11th, Green, and Chestnut avenues--the first area to develop and thus the most valuable. McCormick acquired thirty acres adjacent to this parcel, including Lexington and Howard avenues, as well as forty-five acres across the tracks, in what would become the Second Ward.<sup>3</sup>

The Borough of Altoona was created in February 1854, and in summer 1855 the limits were extended to include Greensburg. As none of its streets connected with Altoona's, an agreement was reached that Main (later 11th), Green, Chestnut, and Lexington streets (later

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<sup>1</sup>Official Program: *Old Home Week, Altoona and Blair County* (August 13-19, 1922), 2.

<sup>2</sup>William Donald Lingenfelter, "A Civil History of the Early Development of the City of Altoona" (Master's thesis, Pennsylvania State College, 1936), 95-96. J. H. Lant, *Blair County Directory for 1870-71* (Altoona: Advance News Co., 1870), 122. A. J. Cassatt, then superintendent of motive power and machinery, was one of several managers of the Altoona Hall and Market Co. Cassatt went on to become the president of the PRR. Also, *Map of Blair County, Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia: Geil and Freed, 1859; 1983 reprint).

<sup>3</sup>Deed books: D/134, H/355.

avenues) would open into Catherine (later 11th) Street.<sup>4</sup> The west side of Greensburg became the First Ward of Altoona when the city was incorporated in 1868. (Although the boundary of the First Ward extends to 12th Street, the project area considered in this chapter lies between 7th and 11th streets.)

While a thriving downtown was being developed south of Greensburg, on the north side were some very different activities. Fairview Cemetery was located on a hillside north of the First Ward in 1857. At 7th Street and Howard Avenue, Altoona Hospital was opened in 1885. And between Chestnut and Howard, 7th and 4th streets, were the PRR's cricket grounds, developed by the company in



Fig. 4.2 Northwest side of 700-800 blocks of Lexington Ave.

1892. East of Chestnut Avenue were the PRR's car shops, established in 1869, with the paint shops located near the corner of Chestnut and 7th.

The section of Greensburg nearest the tracks, which Andrew Green sold to individual owners, was primarily a wholesaling area. By 1859, the PRR had built its freight depot in Greensburg on the tracks near 11th Street. This building dictated the character of the two blocks nearest the tracks. As described in 1896, "The wholesale establishments are principally on 11th Street between 10th and 11th avenues, and Green and 11th avenues between 7th and 9th streets."<sup>5</sup> Besides the warehouses and wholesalers, there was also some industrial activity in the nineteenth century, such as the planing mill at Green Avenue and 8th Street which, when it was built for McCauley and Allison prior to 1860, was the first planing mill in the city aside from the PRR's. There were also several gas works on 11th Avenue. Commercial activity centered on the diamond at 9th and Chestnut, the bridge at 9th Street insuring that this would be a major street. Today, few commercial or industrial buildings dating from the nineteenth

<sup>4</sup>J. Simpson Africa, History of Huntingdon and Blair Counties, Pennsylvania (Philadelphia: Louis H. Everts, 1883), 148.

<sup>5</sup>Charles B. Clark, Semi-Centennial History of Blair County (Altoona: Privately printed, 1896), 62.

century remain in the First Ward project area.

Greensburg served primarily as a residential neighborhood. While many of the houses on Chestnut Avenue were replaced by commercial buildings in the early twentieth century, and most of the buildings southeast of Green were demolished in the 1960s or '70s, the area that McCormick acquired along Lexington and Howard avenues still retains a large number of nineteenth-century residences (Fig. 4.2).

McCormick, who had a dry goods and grocery store on Chestnut Avenue, lived at 9th and Lexington until his death in about 1881; his house is no longer extant. McCormick sold lots to individual owners, particularly from 1868 to 1872, when he seems to have divested himself of most of his property. By

1878, McCormick owned only eleven 50'-wide lots. Although McCormick did not construct housing on a large scale, he may have had arrangements with some of the buyers, for in several cases the future buyer was living on the lot before actually purchasing it. The buyer may have constructed a house while paying off the land, and the deed of sale reflected only the sale of the land.<sup>6</sup>

In the First Ward, the avenues are primary thoroughfares. Each block, which measured anywhere from 175' x 265' to 325' x 265', was bisected by a 15'-wide alley that paralleled the avenue; the lots, measuring about 50' x 125', were perpendicular to the avenues and alleys, extending from one to the other. The most prestigious houses occupied one or more corner

Occupations of Residents of the 1st Ward, 1901		
9 Agents	7 Conductors	2 Pattern Makers
1 Alderman	1 Dairyman	1 Pension Agent
3 Apprentices	2 Dentists	2 Photographers
1 Assistant Engineer, Motive Power	1 Dispatcher	2 Physicians
3 Assistant Foreman	3 Draughtsmen	1 Plasterer
2 Attorneys	3 Druggists	2 Plumbers
1 Bag Master	3 Editors	2 Policemen
1 Baker	5 Electricians	2 Porters
4 Bar Tenders	9 Engineers	1 Post Master
2 Barbers	8 Firemen	3 Printers
12 Blacksmiths	3 Flagmen	1 Registrar & Recorder
3 Boilermakers	9 Foremen	1 Restaurateur
1 Boltmaker	1 Freight Agent	3 Retired
4 Bookkeepers	1 Gateman	1 Saddler
11 Brakemen	14 Gentlemen	6 Salesmen
5 Butchers	1 Gun Smith	1 Secretary
17 Cabinet Makers	1 Huckster	2 Shoemakers
1 Caller	7 Insurance Agents	1 Slate Roofer
23 Car Builders	1 Inspector	1 Steamfitter
2 Car Inspectors	7 Invalids	1 Steward
17 Carpenters	3 Jewellers	3 Students
1 Carpet Weaver	114 Laborers	2 Superintendents
4 Carvers	1 Landlord	2 Tailors
1 Caterer	3 Liverymen	3 Teamsters
1 Cattle Dealer	1 Machine Hand	1 Tile Setter
1 Caulker	34 Machinists	5 Tinnners
1 Chef	27 Merchants	2 Undertakers
1 Chemist	1 Milk Dealer	4 Upholsters
3 Civil Engineers	3 Ministers	1 Vet. Surgeon
60 Clerks	2 Motormen	1 Wagonmaker
2 Coal Dealers	3 Moulders	4 Waiters
1 Collector	3 Operators	
	17 Painters	

Fig. 4.3 Occupations of Residents of the First Ward, 1901 tax-assessment records.

<sup>6</sup>See 1016 Howard Ave., where John Weston was listed as residing in that half of a double house in 1870 before he bought the half-lot from McCormick in 1872 for \$300 (Deed book 35/153); or 803 Lexington Ave., where Joseph Stouffer was listed as living in 1870 although he purchased two-and-a-half lots in 1871 for \$750 (Deed book 26/385). Because of the low prices of these lots, it is unlikely that houses were conveyed with the land.



lots. Nearly all lots were occupied by 1882 (Fig. 4.1); in the 1901 tax assessment, only two lots were listed as vacant. Many more houses were constructed by subdividing the large lots; today, most lots are about 25' wide. The corner lots were also subdivided, so that houses faced the secondary streets.

The larger houses were constructed for successful merchants and businessmen. Usually brick, or at least brick-veneered, these included such mansions as those built in 1884 for Albert P. MacDonald, an insurance agent, at 1307-09 9th St.\*; in 1889 for Solomon Blumenthal, a boot and shoe merchant, at 1308 9th St.\*; and in 1907 for John Seeds, a real estate and insurance agent, at 801 Lexington Ave.\* Louis Plack's house, described as the largest in the city in 1888, was constructed in the 1870s on Chestnut Avenue.<sup>7</sup> Plack, a German immigrant, started a bakery and grocery business in 1852. He built a tannery in 1862 and a planing mill the next year. Plack was one of the largest landholders in the First Ward, owning ten pieces of property valued at \$93,000 in 1901.<sup>8</sup>

Large landholders were the exception in the First Ward, however. Of the 292 landowners in the First Ward in 1878, only twenty-six owned two pieces of property and twelve

Classes of Occupations in the First Ward, 1878		
Rating *	Occupations **	Number
200	physician	1
150	merchant, editor, etc.	9
125	attorney, foreman, gentleman	3
100	merchant, conductor, engineer, foreman, innkeeper, clerk, gentleman, agent, jeweller, operator, etc.	64
90	water superintendent	1
80	merchant, clerk, shoemaker, carpenter, engineer, butcher, conductor, dispatcher, fireman, foreman, tailor, tinner, upholsterer, etc.	79
75	merchant	2
70	carpenter, brakeman, clerk, machinist, blacksmith, cabinet maker, fireman, painter, etc.	37
60	carpenter, clerk, machinist, painter, flagman, brakeman, butcher, drayman, printer, tinner, etc.	104
50	clerk, laborer, bottler, gunsmith, janitor, mechanic, policeman, etc.	17
40	laborer, teacher, drayman	4
30	laborer, teamster, invalid	62
20	invalid, shoemaker	2
Total		385
<p>* As determined by the tax assessor, who is instructed to rate "at what you shall believe to be the actual yearly income arising therefrom."  ** Self-described; listed in order of frequency within each rating.</p>		

Fig. 4.4 Classes of Occupations in the First Ward, 1878 tax-assessment records.

\*An asterisk following a building or address indicates that illustrations and more detailed information on the building can be found in its "building summary" at the end of the chapter.

<sup>7</sup>Converted to the Juniata Club in the 1890s, the house had an apartment building added to the front of it in the early 1900s. The apartment building remains at 910-14 Chestnut Ave., although the house was demolished in 1988.

<sup>8</sup>Samuel T. Wiley and W. Scott Garner, *Biographical and Portrait Cyclopaedia of Blair County, Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia: Gresham Publishing Co., 1892), 239. Charles B. Clark, *C. B. Clark's Altoona City Directory for 1888* (Altoona: Barclay Brothers Sun Steam Printers, 1888). Africa, 157-8. Tax Assessment Book, 1901.

owned more than two. Most of the property was owned by the clerks and skilled workers who formed a solid middle class in Altoona. The tax-assessment records shed light on the people of the neighborhood: because of an occupation tax that was levied on all adult males, the occupations of all male residents were listed and assessed (Fig. 4.3). Although fifty women owned property in 1878, no woman was listed as having an occupation or was assessed for one. In 1878, the inhabitants were divided into thirteen separate ratings, roughly according to their annual incomes (Fig. 4.4). These thirteen ratings can be grouped into three classes:

upper (rated 90 to 200): 68  
middle (rated 50 to 80): 239  
lower (rated 20 to 40): 78

The overwhelming middle-class dominance is repeated in the 1901 tax assessment, which is divided into eight classes by the tax assessor (Fig. 4.5). In 1901, 54 percent of the First Ward's residents fell into one class--the fifth. Defined by the tax assessor as "clerks,

preachers, [and] mechanics . . .," this class contained the skilled workers that were the backbone of Altoona. The group included blacksmiths, boilermakers, brakemen, car builders, carpenters, machinists, patternmakers, and upholsterers--all jobs clearly associated with the PRR. Furthermore, in 1878 and 1901, about an even number fell below this class as above. As might be expected, those in the upper classes owned more property than the lower classes. Curiously, though, laborers (generally rated at 30) in 1878 were more likely to own property than carpenters (generally rated at 60). When divided into three classes, 63 percent of those in the upper class owned property, compared to 34 percent of the middle, and 44 percent of the lower. By 1901, land ownership divided more logically. Only 11 percent of those in the laboring class (the seventh) and 17 percent of those in the skilled-worker class (the fifth) owned property, whereas 38 percent of those in the upper four classes did. Still, the occupations of the landowners constitute a varied list: insurance agent, machinist, cabinet maker, merchant, dentist, saddler, physician, blacksmith, and so on.

Examples of the more modest houses and their clerk and mechanic occupants include the double house at 1016-18 Howard Ave.\*, built in the 1860s for Michael and John Weston and occupied over the years by William Gardner, a machinist; Albert Lyttle, clerk to the

Classes of Occupations in the First Ward, 1901			
	<u>Rating</u> *	<u>Occupations</u> *	<u>Number</u>
1st	\$400	banker, superintendent, broker	32
2nd	300	lawyer, physician	18
3rd	200	merchant, agent, lumberman, editor, landlord, manufacturer, contractor	115
4th	150	railroad conductor, engineer, roller, helper, gentleman, grocer, liveryman, boss, butcher, county and state officers	102
5th	140	clerk, preacher, mechanic, constable, telegraph operator, teacher, justice of the peace, policeman, postmaster	630
6th	120	restaurant keeper, nailer, boarding house keeper	3
7th	100	laborers of all kinds	264
8th	20	invalid	13
Total			1148
*As determined by the tax assessor.			

Fig. 4.5 Classes of Occupations in the First Ward, 1901 tax-assessment records.

foreman of the PRR; Edmund Murphy, assistant foreman of the PRR paint shops; Westley Downs, a machinist; and Ard Steel, another PRR clerk. Charles F. Dinkle, a cabinetmaker, built the house at 805 Lexington Ave.\* in 1872, and sold it a few years later to Jeremiah Weston, a carpenter. Units in Mary Wilson's double house at 708-10 Lexington\* were sold to Jacob Sauder, a carpenter and car builder, and Arthur Mechen, chief clerk to the master mechanic of the PRR.

Most First Ward inhabitants were American-born. In 1870, of 1,925 people living in the First Ward; about 10 percent (197) were foreign-born, less than the citywide average of 14 percent. Only fifteen (less than 1 percent) were black. Not only were First Ward residents American, they tended to have been born in Pennsylvania--all the more unusual in a city where no adults were native to that city. The households tended to be small, and usually nuclear. There were some boardinghouses, particularly near the shops, but these were in the minority. Live-in servants were rare, although the wealthier residents and some boardinghouse operators were likely to employ them. Generally, though, the houses were occupied by a husband, wife, and several children.<sup>9</sup>

These landowners and residents, and the nature of their work, are important to this study because of the buildings that survive them. These buildings reflect of what the occupation statistics indicate--that the neighborhood was one of largely a single class of workers. Their houses are generally one class of house--wood frame, freestanding, two-and-a-half stories, two or three bays wide. Interspersed with these are some double houses and some large, mansion-type houses, but the unity of the streetscape is impressive.

Again, the tax-assessment books shed light on the building stock. In 1878 and 1901, about 10 percent of the houses were described as double houses (forty-one of 359 in 1878; sixty-one of 625 in 1901). The buildings that survive reflect this. In addition, as appropriate for a one-class neighborhood, the houses are similar in size. Most have a 20'- to 25'-front; the double houses have a 15'- to 20'-front for each unit. While there are some grander houses, particularly on the corner lots, most are two-and-a-half stories on narrow lots. In 1878, brick houses were so rare that they were usually noted in the tax-assessment records as such--and valued at about three times the amount of wood-frame houses. By 1900, brick veneer over wood frame, an economical way to build a house that appeared to be brick, was popular. Of the ninety-five houses in the project area, fifty-seven are wood-frame with an original wood exterior, thirty-three are brick-veneered, and three are brick. The wood-frame buildings today have a variety of new coverings--vinyl, aluminum, asphalt, asbestos--as well as their original drop siding. Only one house is stone, and that is the front facade only; there is also one concrete-block exterior (Fig. 4.6).

Although only a few of the plans of these houses were surveyed, it is possible to make some generalizations, as they appear to be typical of urban housing. On three-bay houses, the door opens into a side hall; on two-bay houses, there is no hall, and the door opens directly into the front room. The basic plan is two rooms deep, with an additional room or rooms at the rear of narrower dimensions, so that a window in the rear wall gives light into the second

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<sup>9</sup>U. S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, manuscript census for 1870, 1880, 1900, on microfilm.

room, which is probably also lit by windows in the side wall. If there is no hall to contain the stairway, then the stairway is located in the second room.

Within a certain sameness of size and materials, there is great variety in the form and style, expressing the individuality of the homeowners. The shape and style of the houses vary depending on when they were built; therefore, they are reviewed chronologically:

**Before 1882:** Thirty-four houses built by 1882 are standing today. Most--twenty-nine--are wood frame with an originally wood exterior. The plans are rectangular or L-shaped; the walls tend to be flat, without projections. The windows are usually symmetrically arranged, and all of the same size. Front porches are common. Not all of these are original, but turned wooden columns like those on the porch at 803 Lexington Ave.\* probably are. No. 803 was constructed in the 1860s for Joseph Stouffer, a carpenter.

The roof shape often provides a key to the style and form. About half of these houses have a side-gable roof, where the ridge line parallels the street. The houses range from small, two bays wide, to double houses that are six bays wide. The house at 1001-03 Lexington\* is a six-bay double house with a side-gable roof. Built about 1870, early residents included Samuel K. McCormick, a carpenter, and William Spielman, a PRR clerk. The Charles B. Dudley House at 802 Lexington (Appendix A) was built as a rental property for Andrew J. Sprankle in 1872. It has a side-gable roof and a three-bay front. The ornament that survives on these buildings is usually modest; the cornice may have small paired brackets, or, more commonly, cornice returns on the gable end. Although the facades are usually flat, three houses have two-story projecting bays.

Front-gable roofs, where the ridge line is perpendicular to the street, are reminiscent of the temple form popularized by the Greek Revival style. Only five such houses remain but,

Frame and Exterior Materials of Houses in the First Ward Project Area							
Materials	Pre-1882	1882-1894	1894-1901	1901-1909	1909-1932	Not Dated	Total
wood frame, wood exterior	29	11	5	9	1	2	57
wood frame, brick veneer	3	8	7	8	7	0	33
brick walls, brick exterior	2	1	0	0	0	0	3
other		1		1			2
Total	34	21	12	18	8	2	95
<b>Source:</b> Research on the extant buildings in the project area relied on maps cited in the bibliography. These maps indicate an approximate date of construction; where the information was ambiguous, the building was listed in the "not dated" category. The maps also indicate structural and exterior materials.							

Fig. 4.6 Frame and Exterior Materials of Houses in the First Ward Project Area.

significantly, few houses built after 1882 have this roof. The front-gable house usually has cornice returns, and can be two, three or five bays wide. Stouffer's house at 803 Lexington is a good example of this form.

Mansard roofs, where the roof changes pitch to become nearly vertical--thus providing another usable story--were also built in this period. Usually the mansard is just in the front and rear, not on the sides, which are not prominent because the houses sit close together. On these, the mansard is very steep, and always punctuated by dormer windows.

The last roof type in this period is the cross-gable, which is a side-gable roof with a cross-gable facing front. Reminiscent of the Gothic Revival style, the cross gable is picturesque, creating shadow and variety. In this period, the cross gable is always in the center of the roof to preserve the symmetry. The gable serves as a place for ornament, such as fishscale shingles or a decorative window.

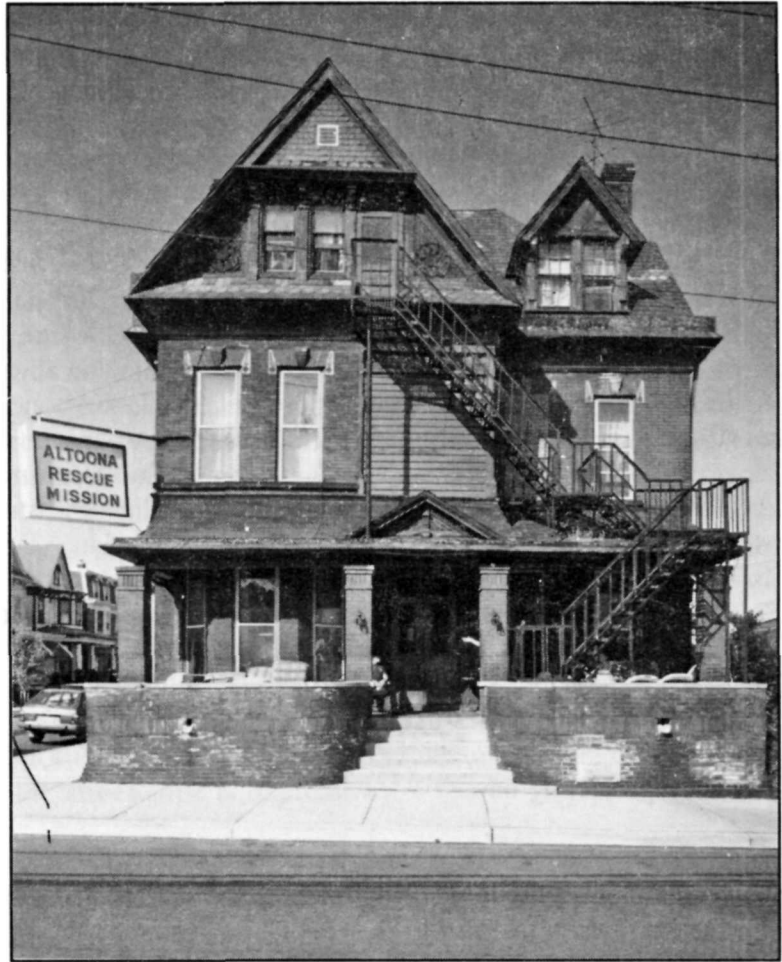


Fig. 4.7 Solomon Blumenthal House, 1308 9th St.

1882-94: Twenty-one houses not present in 1882 appear on the 1894 Sanborn Fire Insurance Map, and are extant today: one is brick, eight are brick-veneered, and eleven are wood-framed; one stone front also dates from this period. Some large buildings date from this period, occupying large lots with irregular plans and a variety of projections and detail reflecting the popularity of the Queen Anne style. A good example of this is the Solomon Blumenthal House\* at 1308 9th St. (Fig. 4.7), built for a merchant. The double houses emulate the mansions, such as the house at 915-17 Lexington\*, dating from 1889, which like the Blumenthal House has a complex roofline and projecting bays. In the smaller buildings, too, the buildings tend to be irregular and asymmetrical; this is often achieved with projecting bays, cross gables, and paired or multi-sized windows. The ornament is heavier, with large brackets at the cornice, elaborate window surrounds, and jigsaw brackets on the porches.

The most popular roof during this period is the cross gable, which often surmounts, or is used in conjunction with, a two-story projecting bay. Contrasting examples of this are found at two houses that date from the 1880s. The house at 808 Lexington, built for William and



Amanda Kantner, features the central cross gable, while a two-story projecting bay is off center. The house at 1401 10th St.\* was constructed for machinist Joseph White, and has a cross gable directly over the asymmetrical projecting bay. Other roof types persist from the earlier period, including side-gable and mansard. One flat roof appears at 1009 Chestnut\*--an unusual stone-fronted house built in 1889 for grocer Martha J. Wolf.

1894-1901: The twelve houses built between 1894 and 1901 continue to be irregular in plan and highly ornamented. Two major roof types are represented. One is the hip roof, which is always accompanied by cross gables, dormer windows or towers. The Alice MacDonald House\* at 1305 9th St. has an extremely steep hipped roof, covered with slate. The cross-gable roof is invariably asymmetrical and crowns a projecting bay. The Frederick and Lisette Ball House\* at 707 Lexington, built for an assistant foreman at the PRR, features a steep cross gable, asymmetricaly placed, but with some Neoclassical ornament. On houses of this period, the variety and lack of flat surfaces on the roofs are reflected in the walls, which have projecting bays that are angular or rounded. Ornament at the cornice and on the variety of porches continues.

1901-09: Between 1901 and 1909, eighteen houses were constructed. In some cases, these continue the forms of the previous decade, with asymmetry and three-dimensionality featured. Others tend toward flatter surfaces, as the Classical Revival style begins to make itself felt. The house at 1401 9th St. or the double house at 1301-03 10th St. are examples of this. Two buildings have gambrel roofs, much like the mansard but turned so there is a gable in front. The gambrel roof appears frequently in areas of Altoona developed at this time. One double house, at 1303-05 7th St.\*, has a parapet and a flat roof. This sophisticated design has single windows grouped together at the third story, and gently projecting bays on the first and second stories. The double house at 710-12 Chestnut is constructed of a rusticated concrete block--an unusual material.

1909-32: Very little new housing was constructed in this neighborhood after 1910. From 1910 to 1920, the population of the ward grew by only about 100, or 2 percent, contrasted to a 30 percent growth in the decade from 1870 to 1880. Only one of the nine houses built between 1909 and 1932 had an original wood exterior. Buff brick, used as a veneer, appeared on two new houses from this period. Alfred Finney's house at 1011 Howard Ave.\* is one of them; the house also has a slate-covered side-gable roof.

Non-Residential Buildings: As noted above, few nineteenth-century commercial and industrial buildings survive in the First Ward to illustrate the nature of the blocks closer to the railroad tracks. Representative of the surviving commercial buildings is the Altoona Mirror Building\* at 1000 Green Ave. Designed in a functional, semi-industrial style by architect Julian Millard, the three-story building is constructed of reinforced concrete--a new use of this material for Altoona--and faced with brick. Dedicated on April 15, 1912, the building has additions on two sides.

The First Ward had its share of institutional buildings. The Chestnut Avenue Methodist Church was located at 10th and Chestnut in the nineteenth century; today there are no churches in the study area. A public school at 10th and Lexington served the ward; it too has been demolished. One of the more interesting institutions is the Altoona Gymnasium\* at 9th

and Lexington. Constructed in 1924, the Classical Revival building was financed by public subscription. The gymnasium soon encountered financial difficulties and was taken over by the Altoona YMCA in 1931. The Altoona YMCA also took over the cricket club when the PRR pulled out, and managed the golf course and clubhouse for three years.<sup>10</sup>

Despite buildings such as the gymnasium and the commercial and industrial buildings that serve the entire city, the First Ward is above all a neighborhood. The variety of single-family and double houses that reflect the history of a clerk-and-mechanic neighborhood built over the last half of the nineteenth century is a rich resource. Following is more information on two relatively unaltered non-residential buildings and twenty-four houses representative of those in the project area and presented in order of construction date.

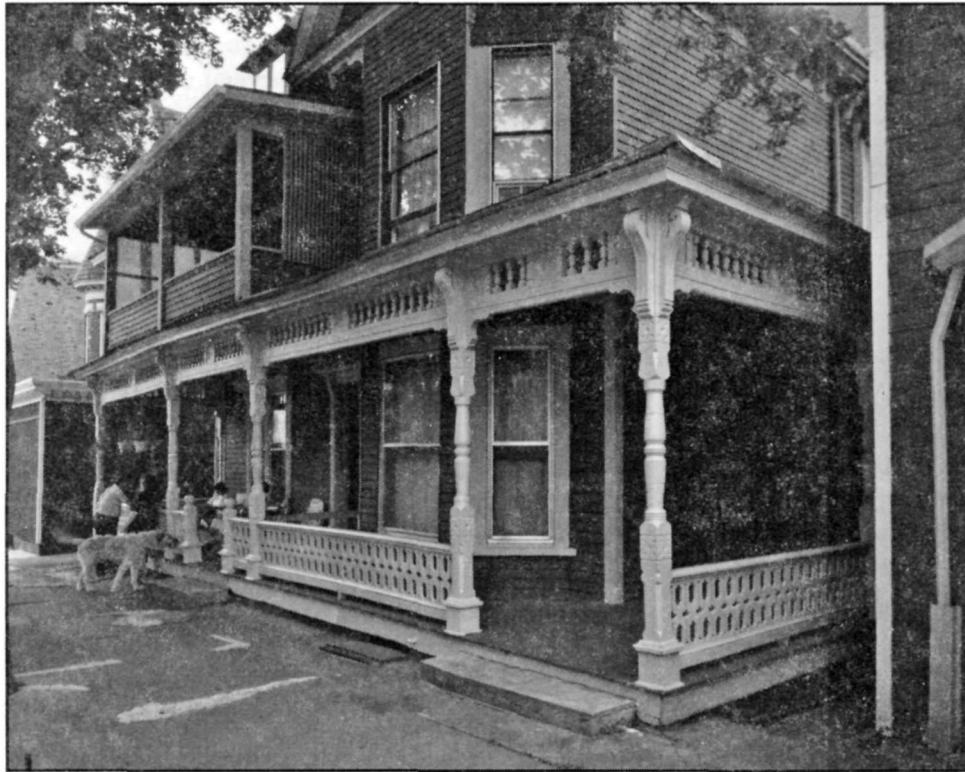


Fig. 4.8 1011-13 Lexington Ave., a double house with an original porch that encourages neighborly visits.

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<sup>10</sup> Altoona Mirror (August 6, 1949). Altoona (Chamber of Commerce, 1925), 58.

## **FIRST WARD BUILDING SUMMARIES**

*(in chronological order)*

### Weston House

1016-18 Howard Ave.

Built 1860s

Description: The two-story house has a wood-frame structure, now clad with asbestos shingles. The four-bay house was a double house, each half measuring approximately 16'-3" x 24'-5", with rear additions. The side-gable roof has cornice returns on the gable ends. There are two different one-story porches on the front, reflecting a long history of separate ownership.

On the interior, the plans of the main block are virtually identical and unaltered. The door opens directly into the living room, which opens through a wide doorway into the dining room, which also contains the stairway. The kitchen is in the rear addition.

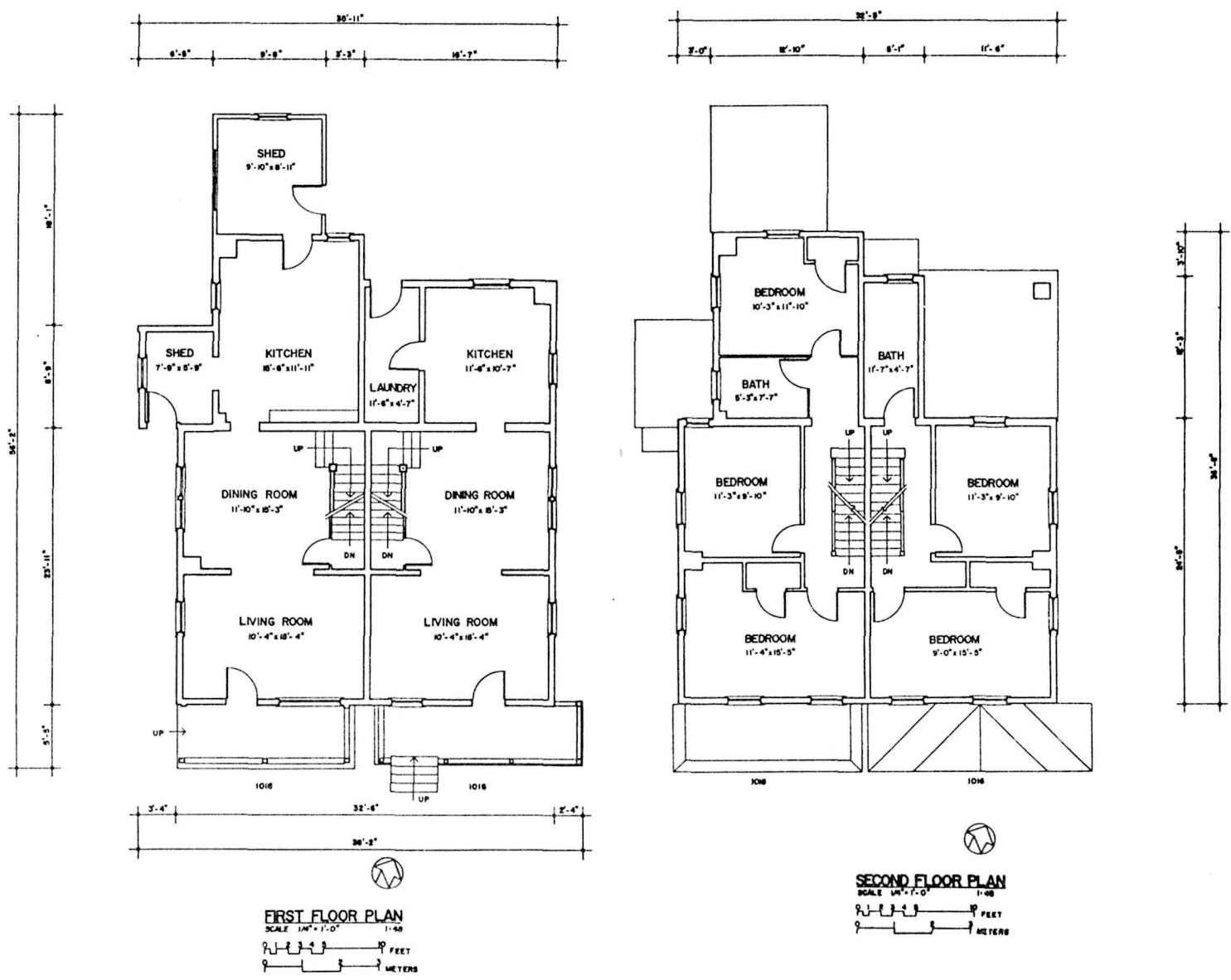
History: This double house was probably built by Michael and John Weston before they had properly acquired the land. In 1868, Michael Weston bought half of a lot from Robert H. McCormick for \$210; John Weston bought the other half in 1872 for \$300.

Michael Weston bought No. 1018 but died soon after. William C. Gardner, a machinist, rented it in 1880 and bought it from Weston's heirs in 1882. Gardner, who in 1880 had a wife and baby daughter, immediately sold it to A. P. MacDonald, who sold it six months later to Sarah Lyttle. Her husband, Albert, was clerk to the foreman of the PRR freight car shop. The Lyttles lived here until 1897, when they sold the house to Emily J. Hays, who rented it to Westley Downs, a machinist, who lived here with



Fig. 4.9 Weston House, 1016-18 Howard Ave. 35mm photo.

Fig. 4.10 Weston House, 1016-18 Howard Ave., first- and second-floor plans. Drawn by Elaine Pierce, June 1989.



his wife, Mary, son Charles, the city electrician, and two other children. In 1903, Hayes sold the property to Ard G. Steel, a clerk for the PRR.

No. 1016 was occupied by John Weston, a carpenter, even before he bought it in 1872. Weston lived here until his death in 1877; his heirs sold it to W. W. Evans, who rented it to Edmund Murphy, assistant foreman of the PRR paint shops. Murphy, who in 1880 was living here with his wife and daughter, stayed here until about 1901.

Sources: Maps: 1859, 1882. City directories. Tax assessment records. Deed books: V/238, 49/458, 49/460, 49/461, 117/381, 145/355, 299/512, 779/77, 35/153, 37/10, 37/12, 149/307, 191/14, 299/510. U.S. Census, 1870, 1880, 1900.

#### 1015 Lexington Ave.

Built 1860s

Description: This two-story house measures approximately 23' x 42'. The wood-frame structure is covered with asphalt shingles. The three-bay front has a one-story projecting bay and an enclosed porch. There is a side-gable roof.

History: This house was built before 1870 when Thomas J. Williams, a tax collector, lived here. In 1877 it was acquired by John P. Lafferty, a butcher, for \$1,850. By 1888 Lafferty had changed his profession to undertaker. He constructed the house next door at No. 1011-13, and moved there in 1890. In 1900 his son, Charles, an embalmer, lived in No. 1015.

Sources: Maps: 1882, 1888. City directories. Tax assessment records. Deed books: 38/78, 534/327.



Fig. 4.11 1015 Lexington Ave.



Joseph Stouffer House I  
803 Lexington Ave.

Built 1860s

Description: This two-and-a-half-story house, measuring approximately 26'-6" x 30', has a wood frame and horizontal wood siding on the exterior. The front gable roof has cornice returns on the gable. The three-bay front has a one-story porch with turned wood columns.

History: This front-gable house, virtually unaltered, dates from the 1860s. In 1870 Joseph Stouffer, a carpenter, was listed as living at the corner of 8th and Lexington, although he did not acquire the 125' x 133' property until 1871. Stouffer and his wife, Hannah, had four daughters and two sons. Stouffer lived here until his death in 1913. This house may have been located farther back on the lot and moved here, as it is not shown in this location on the 1882 map, although it is in 1894. The style of the house indicates a pre-1870 construction date. By 1900, Stouffer worked as a janitor at the First Presbyterian Church. In 1937 his heirs sold the house.

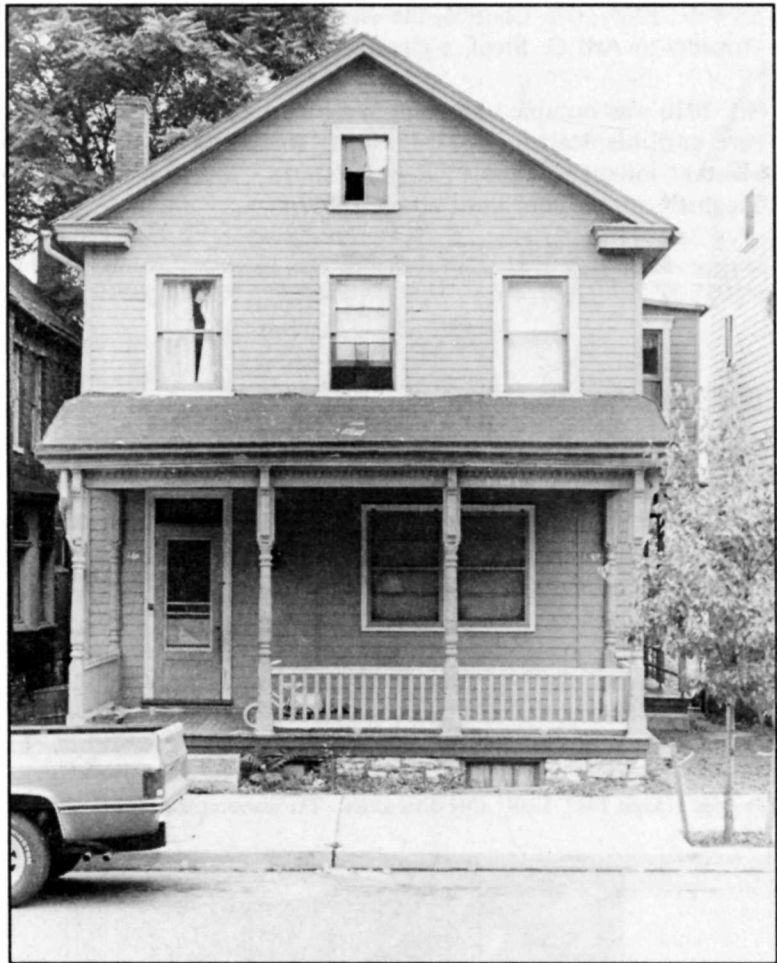


Fig. 4.12 Joseph Stouffer House I, 803 Lexington Ave. 35mm photo.

Sources: Maps: 1859, 1882, 1894. City directories. Tax assessment records. Deed books: 26/385, 437/383. U.S. Census, 1870, 1880, 1900.

Ann Matthews House  
1001-03 Lexington Ave.

Built ca. 1870

Description: This two-and-a-half-story double house is wood frame with clapboard siding. There is a side-gable roof with paired round-arched windows and cornice returns in the gable. The six-bay front, 36' across, has two doors in the center bays. The windows retain their original segmentally arched sashes. The foundation is stone.

History: This large double house was built ca. 1870 for Ann Matthews, who acquired a lot fronting 74' on Lexington Avenue from George Wehn of Johnstown in 1868. The property rose in value from \$300 to \$1,300 between 1870 and 1871. By 1873, Matthews married Samuel McCormick, a carpenter; they

lived in No. 1001 with their three children and a niece. By 1900, Samuel McCormick had died, and his widow took in boarders, including Charles Nicholson, a watchmaker for W. F. Sellers & Co.

The other half of the double house, No. 1003, was occupied by William Spielman, a clerk at the PRR freight depot, in 1878. Ann McCormick sold it to Mary Williamson in 1879. James Williamson, her husband, was a janitor, and they lived here with their five children.



Fig. 4.13 Ann Matthews House, 1001-03 Lexington Ave.

Sources: Maps: 1859, 1882, 1888. City directories. Tax assessment records. Deed books: K/73, W/571, 41/125, 175/80, 463/478, 309/372, 759/62. U.S. Census, 1880, 1900.

Charles F. Dinkle House  
805 Lexington Ave.

Built 1872

Description: This two-and-a-half-story house, measuring 24' x 22'-6", is wood frame with novelty siding. There is a wood-shingled mansard roof across the front, with three gable dormers. There are paired



Fig. 4.14 Charles F. Dinkle House, 805 Lexington Ave. and 807-09 Lexington Ave.

brackets at the cornice. The four-bay front has a one-story gable porch (added later), with triangular shingles in the gable and paneled box columns.

History: This house was constructed in 1872 when Charles F. Dinkle, a cabinetmaker, purchased a 25'-wide lot from Joseph Stouffer, who lived next door at No. 803. Dinkle was taxed for a house here in 1873, and in 1876 sold it to Jeremiah Weston for \$1,800. Weston, a carpenter, lived here until his death in 1916. Weston and his wife, Annie, had five children. His daughter, Blanche, who was listed as a dressmaker in 1900 and a clerk in 1931, lived here until the 1930s.

Sources: Maps: 1882, 1894. City directories. Tax assessment records. Deed books: 28/613, 34/500, 784/501. U.S. Census, 1880, 1900.

Isabel A. Davis  
House I  
704-06 Lexington  
Ave.

Built ca. 1873

Description: This two-story brick building is a five-bay double house; one unit is three bays wide (18'-6" front), the other two (14'-5" front). The main block is square, measuring 32'-11" x 32'-10", with a 15'-10" deep addition in the rear that accommodates an additional room on each floor for each unit. There is a side-gable roof and different one-story porches across the front. The windows at the second story have segmentally arched sash and molded lintels, while the square windows of the first floor appear to be an alteration.



Fig. 4.15 Isabel A. Davis House I, 704-06 Lexington Ave.

On the interior, the primary difference in the two units is that the three-bay unit has a hallway, whereas in the two-bay unit the front door opens directly into the living room. The three-bay unit had two stairways along the party wall; one of these has been removed. The two units have comparable room sizes and numbers of rooms.

History: This double house was probably built for Isabel A. Davis, the widow of Philip, about 1873. Although Davis did not officially acquire the property until 1879, she was assessed for a double house here in 1874. Davis raised seven children in the three-bay side of the house. Her sons Frank, William, and Emmitt became a carpenter, machinist, and tinsmith, respectively. The other half of the house was rented by carpenter Thomas F. Donnelly, his wife Mary, and their three children in 1880.

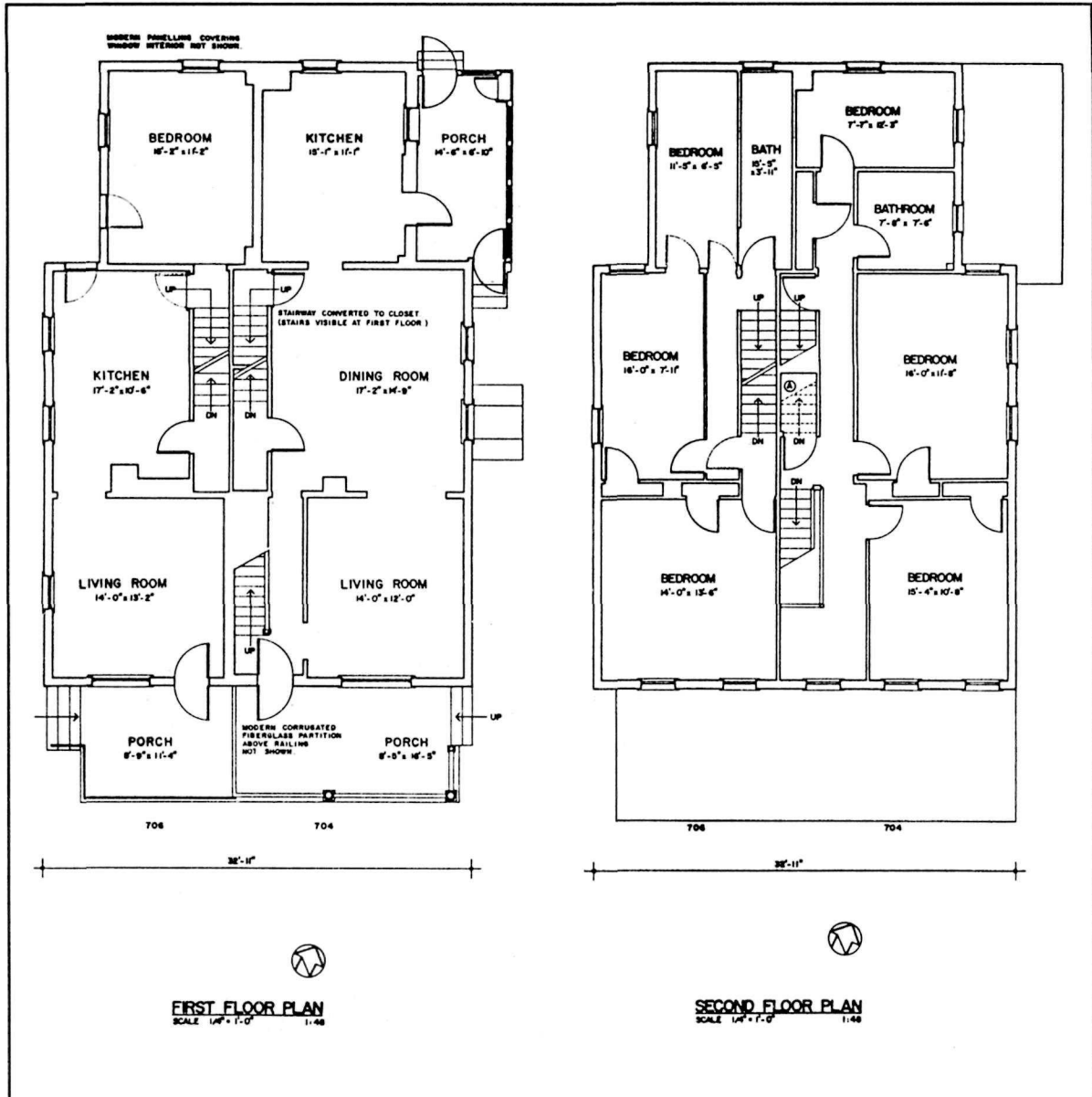


Fig. 4.16 Isabel A. Davis House I, 704-06 Lexington Ave., first floor plan, drawn by Pat Reese; second floor plan, drawn by Paul J. Skeet; June 1989.

In 1888, Davis moved to a new house next door at 700 Lexington Ave. She returned to the two-bay side of the house by 1900; Emmitt, who was widowed, and her unmarried daughter Mary, and a niece lived with her. In 1900, Scottish-born Thomas Weir, his three children, and a servant lived in the other half. After Isabel Davis's death in 1903, her youngest son, Henry J. Davis, the secretary for the select council at city hall, lived here. In 1912, Mary Holmes, Isabel Davis's daughter, sold the house to Ira S. Wolcott, a teacher at the Wright School who lived here until his death in 1934.

Sources: Maps: 1859, 1882, 1894. City directories. Tax assessment records. Deed books: 45/503, 213/184, 547/453. U.S. Census, 1870, 1880, 1900.

Mary Wilson House  
708-10 Lexington  
Ave.

Built 1873

Description: Each half of this double house has undergone considerable alterations.

Originally, each half measured 21'-6" x 25' with a three-bay front. The wood-frame structure had horizontal wood siding. The side-gable roof has a chimney placed on a diagonal, shared by both units.

Alterations to No. 708 include a two-story projecting bay and aluminum siding.

No. 710 has been altered by a large gable dormer with fishscale shingles, and a one-story porch across the front.

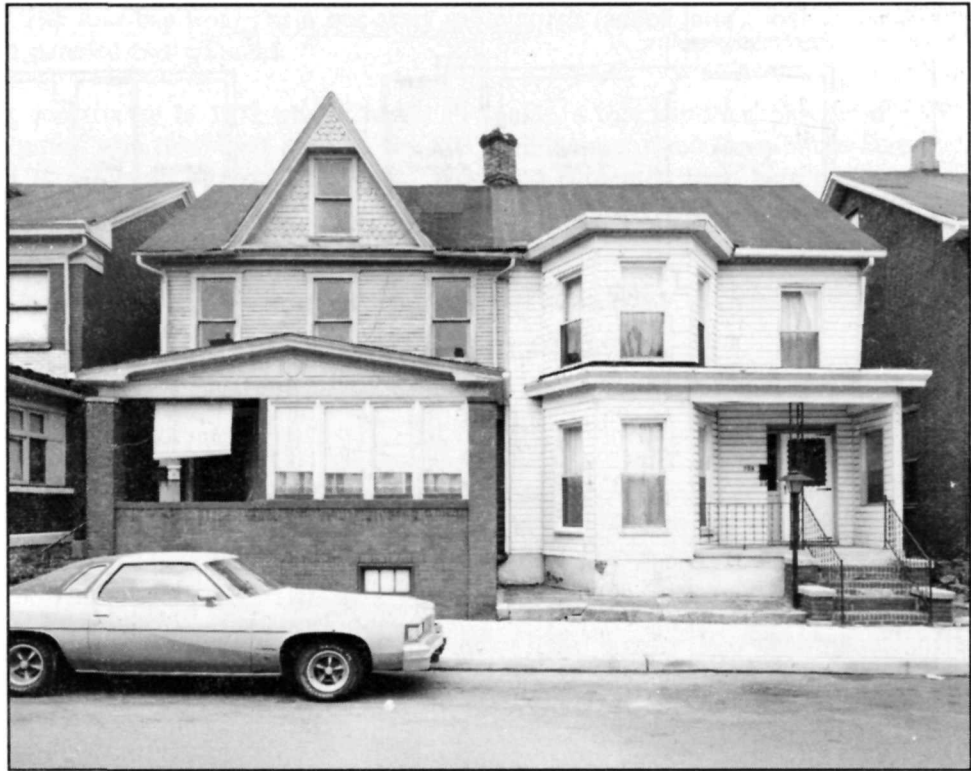


Fig. 4.17 Mary Wilson House, 708-10 Lexington Ave.

History: The radically different appearance of each unit of this double house testifies to the fact that the units had different owners early in their history. Mary Wilson bought a 50'-wide lot here from Robert H. McCormick in 1872. She apparently built this double house, for after her death in 1876, the same lot was sold for \$2,200. The new owner, John P. Levan, sold each half of the house to a different owner for \$1,200. No. 710 was owned and occupied by Jacob Sauder, a German-born carpenter and car builder. Sauder and his wife, Matilda (they had no children), lived there for at least twenty years; his widow sold the house in 1903. Arthur Mechen, an immigrant from England, bought No. 708, and also lived there with his wife and daughter for more than twenty years. In 1896, Mechen was chief clerk to the master mechanic of the PRR.

Sources: Maps: 1859, 1882, 1894. City directories. Tax assessment records. Deed books: 28/617, 40/486, 41/492, 52/96, 151/304, 175/214, 188/447, 405/180, 636/228. U.S. Census, 1880, 1900.

Joseph Stouffer House II  
1301-03 8th St.

Built 1882

Description: This four-bay double house, measuring approximately 30'-6" x 28'-6", has a wood-frame structure with its original drop siding. There is a side-gable roof with chimneys in each end. The window surrounds are slightly pedimented and incised. The two doors, located in the end bays, have metal awnings.



History: Joseph Stouffer, who lived at 803 Lexington Ave. from before 1870 until his death in 1913, built this house for rental purposes in 1882. In 1901, William Bragonier, a painter, lived in No. 1301 (then No. 1309) with his wife, Anna, and Henry D. Grove, a carpenter, lived in No. 1303 (then No. 1311) with his wife and daughter. In 1938, Stouffer's daughters gave the house to the Presbyterian Home.

Sources: Maps: 1882, 1894. City directories. Tax assessment records. Deed books: 26/385, 441/499. U.S. Census, 1900.



Fig. 4.18 Joseph Stouffer House II, 1301-03 8th St.



Fig. 4.19 Joseph White House, 1401 10th St., side view.

Joseph White House  
1401 10th St.

Built 1883

Description: This two-and-a-half-story house, measuring approximately 21' x 46', is wood frame with novelty siding. The side-gable roof has a cross gable over a hexagonal oriel at the second story. The facade is heavily ornamented: paired brackets at the cornice, fishscale shingles in the gable, heavy lintels over the second-story windows. At the first floor, there is a

square window under the oriel, and a one-story porch across the front.

History: This house was built for Joseph White, a machinist, in 1883. White bought the lot for \$850 in 1883; he sold it for \$2,800 in 1886 to Edgar O. Geesey. In 1889, the house (old No. 1411) was acquired by George M. Stewart, a plumber and gas fitter, who lived here with his wife and two children. After his death, his widow Harriet lived here until 1923. She sold it to Harry S. Bartley of the Bartley Lumber Company (lumber dealers, general contractors, and real estate) who owned it until 1942.

Sources: Maps: 1882, 1888. City directories. Tax assessment records. Deed books: 41/539, 51/9, 62/246, 73/420, 77/514, 304/698, 467/407. U.S. Census, 1900.

Albert P. MacDonald House  
1307-09 9th St.

Built 1884

Description: This large brick house has a cross-gable roof covered with patterned slate. A three-story square tower rises above the two-story house. The building features a wraparound porch and projecting bays, including one with a pyramidal slate-covered roof extending up to the bargeboard in the gable peak.

History: This brick house, located prominently on a corner site, was constructed for a businessman. Albert P. MacDonald, an insurance agent, built this house in 1884, apparently to replace the house owned by Robert H. McCormick. McCormick's estate sold the lot, measuring 99' on Lexington and 50' on 9th Street, to MacDonald in 1884 for \$6,000--then a considerable sum. By 1893, MacDonald was postmaster, but two years later he died at age 47. During MacDonald's occupancy, the address of the house was 903 Lexington Ave.

MacDonald's widow, Alice, sold the house in 1899 to Sarah J. Rice for \$7,000; Rice sold it months later to Horace S. Prutzman. Prutzman sold "wholesale carpets, oil cloths, wood and willow ware, house furnishing goods, granite and tinware, etc." from his store at 9th Street and Green Avenue. Prutzman probably added the sweeping porch to this house, which was not indicated on the 1894 map. In the 1920s, the garage was added in the basement, on 9th Street. The Prutzman family owned it until 1946.

Sources: Maps: 1882, 1894, 1909, 1932. City directories. Tax assessment records. Deed books: 53/464, 119/598, 121/1, 125/466, 125/468, 125/470, 527/343.



Fig. 4.20 Joseph White House, 1401 10th St.



Fig. 4.21 Albert P. MacDonald House, 1307-09 9th St., front facade.



Fig. 4.22 Albert P. MacDonald House, 1307-09 9th St., side facade.

Joseph Stouffer House III  
1305 8th St.

Built 1885

Description: This wood-frame structure, which measures approximately 18' x 28'-6", is clad with narrow-board siding. The two-and-a-half-story building has a mansard roof with slate shingles and two dormer windows. The three-bay front has two entrances, one to what appears to have been a shop.

History: Like the house at 1301-03 8th St., this house was built for rental purposes by Joseph Stouffer. In 1885, Stouffer was taxed for a house (803 Lexington Ave.) and a double house (1301-03 8th St.); in 1886 his properties had increased to include three houses, indicating that this one had been built. In 1900, the building was occupied by Alfred Talhelm, a blacksmith, his wife Annie, their three children, and six boarders, all single males who worked at the PRR shops. The shop entrance in this building remains a mystery, although deeds in the 1920s describe the building as having a first-floor store and apartments on the second and third floors. Stouffer's heirs sold the building in 1923.



Fig. 4.23 Joseph Stouffer House III, 1305 8th St. 35mm photo.

Sources: Maps: 1882, 1894. City directories. Tax assessment records. Deed books: 26/385, 305/678, 322/15, 322/17, 322/20, 360/629, 372/687, 794/618. U.S. Census, 1900.

William and Amanda Kantner House  
808 Lexington Ave.

Built 1886

Description: This two-and-a-half-story, highly ornamented building has been painted in keeping with its architectural ornament. Of wood-frame construction, the 20'-4" x 44'-2" building is clad with novelty siding. The side-gable roof has a steep, central cross gable with a round-arched window. There is a two-story hexagonal projecting bay and a one-story porch across the front. The bracketed cornice and hoodmolds over all the windows are highly decorative.

On the interior, the door opens into a hall. To the right is the bay-windowed living room, which has double doors into the dining room. Oddly, the fireplace in the dining room is along the hall side of the house; the stairway is on the opposite wall.

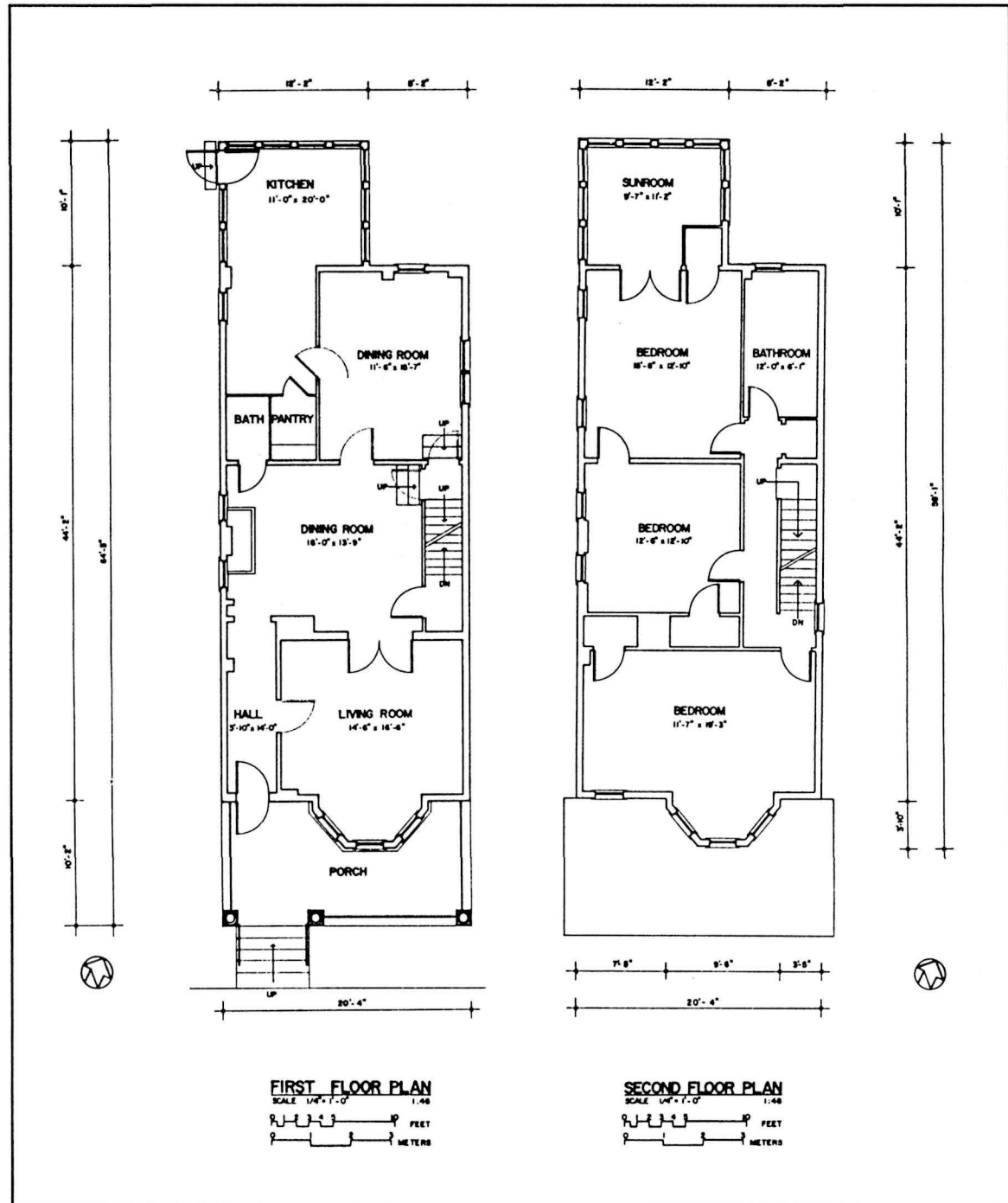


Fig. 4.24 William and Amanda Kantner House, 808 Lexington Ave., first and second floor plans, drawn by Pat Reese, June 1989.

**History:** Amanda Oburn acquired this lot in 1886, shortly before her marriage to William G. Kantner, a carpenter. In 1887, Kantner was assessed for a house here. The Kantners, who had four children, continued to live here into the 1930s. In 1938 Kantner's daughter, Ruth, inherited the house.



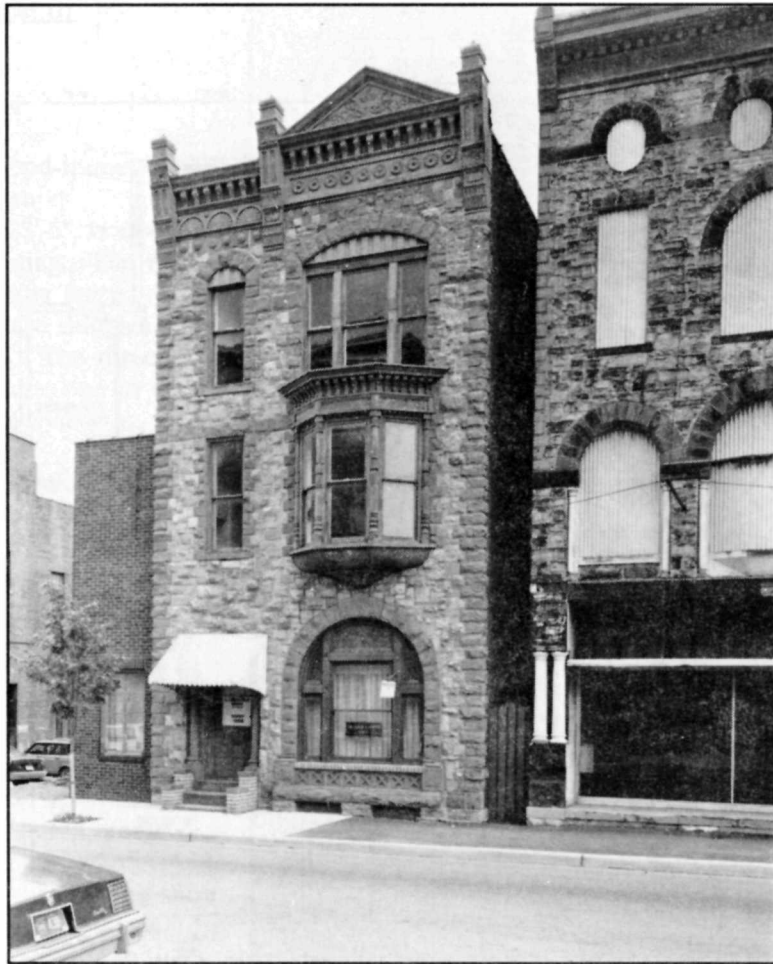


Fig. 4.25 806 Lexington Ave. and William and Amanda Kantner House, 808 Lexington Ave.

Sources: Maps: 1882, 1894. City directories. Tax assessment records. Deed books: 51/100, 62/80, 61/587, 61/589, 442/537, 501/541. U.S. Census, 1900.

Isabel A. Davis House II  
700 Lexington Ave.

Built 1888

Description: This two-and-a-half-story house, measuring approximately 22'-6" x 47', is wood frame with a brick veneer. The side-gable roof has a central cross gable with a round-arched window in the gable. There is a bracketed cornice and a hexagonal oriel. All windows have segmental arches. There is a one-story porch across the front.

History: After living next door at No. 704-06 for at least fifteen years, Isabel A. Davis built this house in 1888. She lived here until 1900, when she sold it for \$5,000 to Joseph W. Carter, a dentist with offices in the Masonic Temple building. Carter, who had a wife, three children, and a servant in 1900, stayed here until his death in the 1930s.

Sources: Maps: 1882, 1894. City directories. Tax assessment records. Deed books: 45/503, 125/294, 432/178, 432/186, 560/519. U.S. Census, 1900.

W. S. Hostler House  
1303 9th St.

Built 1888

Description: The cross-gabled house measures approximately 20' x 44'. The wood-frame structure is clad with a brick veneer. The three-bay front has segmental-arched windows and a bracketed cornice; there is additional ornament in the peak of the gable. The porch has been enclosed with brick.

History: Coal dealer W. S. Hostler built this house in 1888, shortly after acquiring the lot from the estate of Robert H. McCormick for \$1,000. Hostler lived here until 1895 when he sold it for \$5,000 to William J. Heinsling, the president of Fidelity Bank. In 1900 Heinsling rented it to Louis Hinman, who ran a wholesale produce business and lived there with his wife, five children, and a servant. That year Heinsling sold it to Margaret Painter,



Fig. 4.26 Isabel A. Davis House II, 700 Lexington Ave.



Fig. 4.27 1301 9th St. and W. W. Hostler House, 1303 9th St.

who lived there with her husband, Harry, a blacksmith. Painter sold it in 1921, after his wife's death.

Sources: Maps: 1882, 1888. City directories. Tax assessment books. Deed books: 68/250, 105/398, 129/82, 289/180, 291/630, 401/21. U. S. Census, 1900.

Martha J. Wolf House  
1009 Chestnut Ave.

Built 1889

Description: This greenstone-fronted building is one of the most unusual in the First Ward. The structure is wood frame and veneered with brick on all but the front facade; the front is faced with ornamental rough-faced, random-course, ashlar greenstone and brownstone. The flat roof--also a rarity for a house in Altoona--is defined by a metal cornice. There is a metal oriel projecting from the second story. The round-arched window on the first floor contains stained glass.

History: This building is associated with the W. H. & L. C. Wolfe Co., which started in the grocery business in 1888 next door at No. 1011. In 1898 they were advertised as "cigar manufacturers and bicycle dealers," and in 1900 as "dealers in bicycles, tires, sundries, guns, ammunition, general sporting goods and cigar manufacturers." In 1905, they opened the first Buick dealership in Altoona, which by 1945 was the oldest Buick dealership in the world, according to company publicity.



Fig. 4.28 Martha J. Wolf House, 1009 Chestnut Ave.

This house was built about 1889, when the assessed value of this property rose from \$2,000 to \$4,000. John P. Wolf acquired the property in 1870; after his death, his widow Martha ran a grocery store, probably next door at No. 1011. Martha Wolf built the house, or altered one on the site, and shared it with her sons William H. Wolfe (1866-1938) and Lewis C. Wolfe (1868-?1945). In 1900, Georgiana Thompson ran a boarding house here; one of her boarders was Lewis C. Wolfe. Other occupants included her daughter, Linda, 22; boarders Charles Halunlick, a bookkeeper, draughtsman Edwin Treas, patternmaker Jesse Garrison, druggist William Davis, bicycle repairer Vance Evans, and machinist Edward Williams; and a servant, Catherine Apple, and her 2-year-old daughter. The Wolfe family owned the building until 1948.

Sources: Maps: 1888, 1894. City directories. Tax assessment records. Deed books: 31/86, 31/87, 83/260, 355/14, 355/17, 583/5. U. S. Census, 1870, 1880, 1900. Wolf, 502.

Solomon Blumenthal House  
1308 9th St.

Built 1889

Description: This large house has a polychromatic slate hipped roof with large and small gable dormers, and ornamented chimneys. The wood-framed structure is veneered with brick. The 35' x 35' house has several projections, including a two-story bay on the front, rounded on the first floor, square on the second. The windows also have stone keystones.

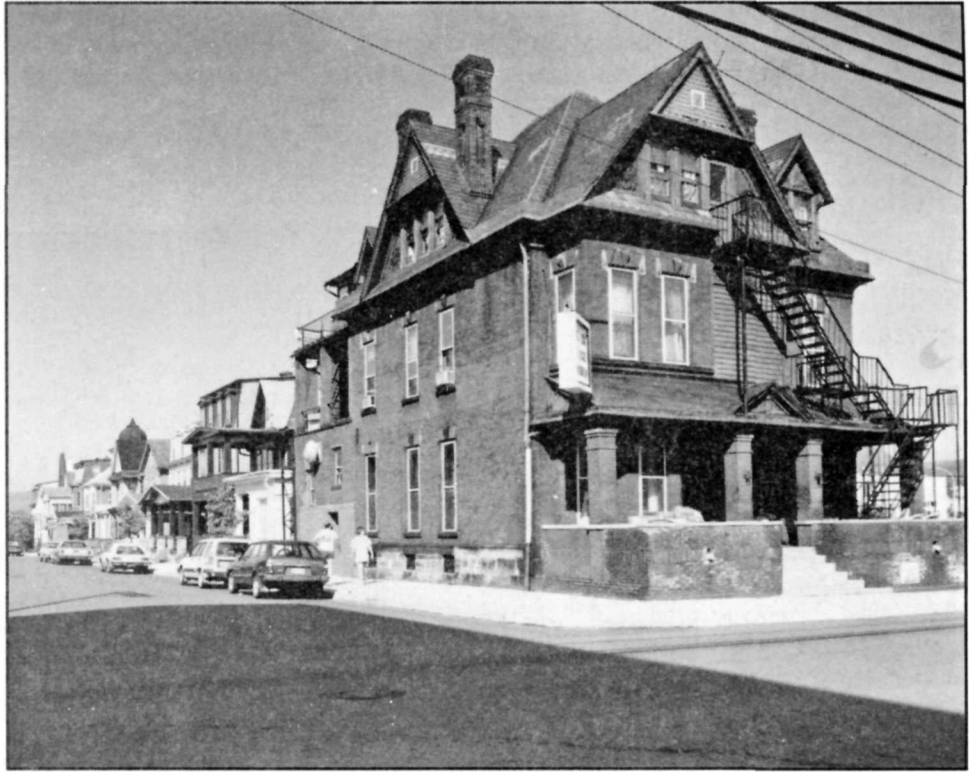


Fig. 4.29 Solomon Blumenthal House, 1308 9th St., perspective.



Fig. 4.30 Solomon Blumenthal House, 1308 9th St., Lexington Ave. facade.

There is a one-story porch across the front. An 1896 photograph shows the building to be remarkably unchanged, except for the addition of the fire escapes.

History: This house was built in 1889 for Solomon Blumenthal, a merchant who sold boots and shoes from his store on 11th Avenue. In 1892 he sold it to David Koch, assistant foreman at the PRR tin shops, for \$9,000. In 1896, this house (then No. 1320) was featured in the Board of Trade's

publication *Illustrated Altoona*; it was no coincidence that Koch was a founder and treasurer of the Board of Trade. Koch, who was born in Germany, was also the secretary of the Logan, Keystone, and Fidelity Building and Loan associations. The Altoona Rescue Mission has owned the house since 1970.

Sources: Maps: 1882, 1894. City directories. Tax assessment records. Deed books: 73/364, 92/274, 196/502, 275/152, 902/91. U.S. Census, 1900. Clark, *Illustrated Altoona*, photograph p. 95.

Harrison Oburn  
House  
915-17 Lexington  
Ave.

Built 1889

Description: This elaborate double house has various attributes of the larger single houses of the day. There is a hipped roof with projecting gables and a gable dormer to give the roofline complexity. There is a pair of two-story hexagonal projecting bays on the front, and the third-floor gable roof extends to cover them. A one-story porch spans the two bays and covers the two



Fig. 4.31 Harrison Oburn House, 915-17 Lexington Ave.

entrances, making the house appear as one. The structure is wood frame with a brick veneer, the windows have segmental arches, and there is a bracketed cornice.

History: Harrison Oburn, a grocer who lived at 810 Lexington Ave., built this double house to rent out in 1889, according to tax records. Occupants of No. 915 in 1901 included George W. Barto, a flagman, his wife Martha, and three boarders: tile setter Frank White, department store cashier Amanda Thompson, and slater Charles Davis. No. 917 was rented by painter Edward Hoine, his wife Hannah, two children, and a married daughter and her husband. Boarders included David Noll, a shophand, Ralph Beckley, a car builder, and Beckley's wife and baby. In 1903, Oburn's heirs sold each half of the house to a different owner.

Sources: Maps: 1888, 1894. City directories. Tax assessment records. Deed books: 51/304, 143/112, 313/368, 321/166, 467/347. U.S. Census, 1900.



David A. Little House I  
1301 7th St.

Built 1894

Description: The two-and-a-half-story mansard-roofed house has a wood frame and a brick veneer. The 22'-6" x 44'-6" building has a two-story projecting bay and a bracketed cornice. Three dormers punctuate the slate-covered mansard roof. The front door is not original.

History: David A. Little, foreman of the PRR's paint shops, built this house in 1894 just after acquiring the lot from Ezekiel Wherry. Little, who had a wife and five children, lived here (old No. 1309) until his death in 1922.

Sources: Maps: 1894, 1909. City directories. Tax assessment records. Deed books: 58/376, 101/320, 473/403. U.S. Census, 1900.



Fig. 4.32 David A. Little House I, 1301 7th St.

Alice MacDonald House  
1305 9th St.

Built 1896

Description: This two-and-a-half-story house, measuring 25'-6" x 45'-6", has a steep, hipped roof, covered with slate. There are also hipped dormers, and a roof that extends to cover the second-story oriel. The wood-frame structure has a brick veneer. There is a one-story porch across the front. The windows are segmentally arched.

History: After the death of her husband Albert in 1895, Alice MacDonald continued to live in their house at 1307-09 9th St. (formerly 903 Lexington Ave.). But she bought this adjoining lot and built this house (then No. 1317) as rental property. In 1900 William F. Sellers, a partner in the jewelry firm, lived here briefly with his wife and baby.

Sources: Maps: 1894, 1909. City directories. Tax assessment records. Deed books: 53/499, 123/156, 130/449, 130/447, 553/262. U.S. Census, 1900.



Fig. 4.33 Alice MacDonald House, 1305 9th St.

Frederick and Lisette  
Ball House  
707 Lexington Ave.

Built 1897  
Architect: Beezer  
Brothers

Description: This two-and-a-half-story house, measuring 22' x 56', is brick-veneered wood frame. The side-gable roof has a large, striking cross gable over the two-story rounded bay. The cornice of the bay has classical swags and garlands in the frieze. There is a one-story porch across the front.

An 1897 photograph shows the house in its original condition. A small dormer on the front, now partially boarded up, originally had a round-arched pediment. There were small spires at the peak of the gable, as well as the corners of the house, and balustrades atop the projecting bay and first-story porch. Generally, though, the house is remarkably unchanged.

History: According to a catalog of the architects' work, the Beezer Brothers designed this house for Frederick Ball, a



Fig. 4.34 Frederick and Lisette Ball House, 707 Lexington Ave. (left).

foreman for the PRR. In 1894 Lisette Ball acquired the property here and three years later her husband, Frederick, was taxed for a "new house." Frederick Ball was Irish-born of English parents; Lisette was Pennsylvania-born of German parents. They had five children. Lisette Ball died in 1904, and Frederick sold the house to John Schenk for \$7,000. Months later, Schenk sold it to Jennie Whitman for \$7,500. She moved in with her husband, Edward, who sold millinery and ladies' cloaks.



Fig. 4.35 John S. Seeds House, 801 Lexington Ave.



Fig. 4.36 John S. Seeds House, 801 Lexington Ave., perspective from 8th Street.

He died within a few years and Jennie, a milliner, lived here until her death in 1940.

Sources: Maps: 1894, 1909. City directories. Tax assessment records. Deed books: 104/58, 148/322, 158/145, 515/102. U.S. Census, 1900. Beezer Brothers, 1897, 137.

John S. Seeds  
House I  
801 Lexington Ave.

Built 1907

Description: Located at an intersection, this fanciful Queen Anne-style house has a distinctive corner tower with a bell-

shaped roof. The wood-framed building, measuring approximately 27'-6" x 38', is veneered with brick, but some walls are covered with wood in decorative patterns. The hipped roof has prominent cross gables. The one-story porch wraps around to the side of the house in a curve. There are oriels at the second story. The first story has leaded, beveled, and stained-glass windows.

History: John S. Seeds, a real estate, insurance, and steamship agent, built his house in 1907. Seeds had previously owned and occupied the house at 812 Lexington Ave. The 1907 tax book noted that the house at No. 801 was "not finished"; the following year the house was finished and the assessed value rose from \$700 to \$4,100. In 1917 Seeds sold the house for \$11,000. In 1918 it was bought to serve as the permanent residence for the district superintendent of the Altoona District of the Central Pennsylvania Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church. (See John S. Seeds House II, 204 Coleridge Ave., Llyswen)

Sources: Maps: 1894, 1909. City directories. Tax assessment records. Deed books: 171/106, 249/586, 290/4, 475/116.

### David A. Little House II 1303-05 7th St.

Built 1909

Description: This three-story bilaterally symmetrical double house, measuring approximately 31' x 33', has a brick-veneered wood frame. The stepped parapet conceals the roof. The third-floor facade has four windows united by a common sill and hoodmolds. There are two two-story projecting bays, whose windows share a continuous stone lintel. A one-story porch unites the front facades.

History: This house was built in 1909 as rental property for David A. Little, a PRR foreman, who lived next door at No. 1301 (then No. 1309). Little owned the building (then No. 1311), valued at \$3,400 in 1910, until his death in 1922.

Sources: Maps: 1894, 1909. City directories. Tax assessment records. Deed books: 164/157, 473/403.

### Alfred F. Finney House 1011 Howard Ave.

Built 1917

Description: This two-and-a-half-story house has a slate-covered side-gable roof with two hipped dormers, one large and one small. The wood-frame structure is clad in a buff-colored brick veneer.



Fig. 4.37 David A. Little House II, 1303-05 7th St.





Fig. 4.38 Alfred F. Finney House, 1011 Howard Ave.

There is an oriel at the second story. The doorway has beveled-glass sidelights and transom window. There is a one-story porch across the front.

The interior features oak woodwork in a Mission style, most of it still unpainted. The plan of the first floor places the kitchen behind the stair hall, a living room in the front next to the stair hall, and a dining room behind the living room.

History: Engineer Alfred F. Finney was assessed for a "new

brick-cased dwelling" here, valued at \$2,950, in 1918. Finney lived in the previous building on the site with his parents; in 1901 he attempted to buy it, but the deed was lost. A new deed was drawn up and recorded in 1916, and Finney began construction on his new house. His daughter acquired the house upon his death, and sold it in 1986 to the present owner.

Sources: Maps: 1909, 1932. City directories. Tax assessment records. Deed books: 243/204, 871/710, 1128/742. U.S. Census, 1900.

### Altoona Mirror Building 1000 Green Ave.

Built 1912

Architect: Julian Miliard

Description: The original portion of this building, which also faces on to 10th Street, had an unusual and innovative structural system. Concrete columns formed the frame of the structure, with red brick curtain walls. The floors are concrete and the interior walls are buff brick. The three-story building has a flat roof and parapet. On the Green Avenue facade, the center bay is wider than the other two bays. There are concrete plaques with the letter "M" at the third floor.

The four-bay addition along Green Avenue was designed to mimic the original, although it uses a steel frame. The bays are evenly spaced, each with paired windows.

The interior of the building is described at length in a contemporary brochure. The business offices occupied the front portion of the first story, while the press room occupied the rear. The press itself, a



Goss Straightline Perfecting press, had a specially built foundation and it took five weeks to install the machinery. The second floor housed the editorial room in front and the composing room in the rear; the third floor was devoted to the job department.

History: The Evening Mirror was founded in 1874 by Harry Slep, a German immigrant, and George J. Akers. During the 1877 railroad strike, the Mirror sided with management, and as a result of a loss in readership, Slep and Akers were forced to sell the newspaper. Slep, in partnership with his son William, reacquired the Mirror in 1890. The evening Mirror and its main competitor, the morning Tribune, were the two daily newspapers in Altoona for much of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Today the Mirror is Altoona's only daily newspaper.



Fig. 4.39 Altoona Mirror Building, 1000, Green Ave.

Slep hired architect Julian Millard to design this building; ground was broken on July 12, 1911, and it was dedicated on April 15, 1912. The contractor was Clifford Hughes. The building was later expanded, both toward the alley and also toward 11th Street. The Mirror currently also occupies the building at 1001 Chestnut Ave.

Sources: Maps: 1909, 1932. Altoona Mirror Year Book. Souvenir Booklet, 4, 70-71. Altoona Tribune (January 15, 1916). Wiley and Garner, 365. Wolf, 433.

#### Altoona Gymnasium (YMCA) Lexington Avenue and 9th Street

Built 1924

Description: This two-story Italian Renaissance-style structure measures approximately 132' x 116' x 42' high. Constructed of reinforced concrete, the building is faced with buff brick. The roof is flat with a modillioned cornice. The front facade is arranged in seven bays. The second-floor windows are large, round-arched, and trimmed with stone or concrete. The first-floor windows are small and unadorned. The entrance in the center of the facade is also trimmed with stone or concrete and topped with a cornice, above which is a blank concrete panel.

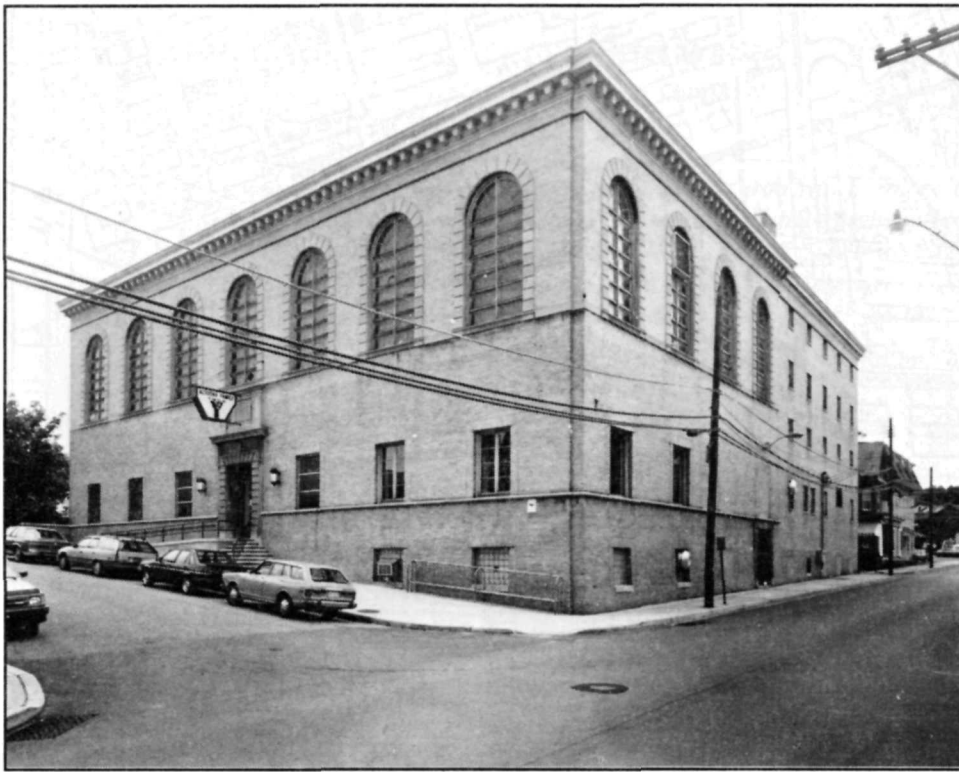


Fig. 4.40 Altoona Gymnasium (YMCA), Lexington Ave. and 9th Street.

There is a swimming pool on the first floor and a gym above. According to a 1925 description, "The Altoona gymnasium, a new health center, has one of the finest gymnasium floors and swimming pools in any gymnasium in the country."

History: The Altoona Gymnasium was built in 1924 through public subscription at a cost of \$350,000. The gym was financially unsuccessful, however, and closed within a few years. In 1931 it was sold

to the Altoona YMCA for \$101,000 including the equipment. The YMCA is still located in the building.

Sources: Maps: 1909, 1932. Altoona, 44, 58. Altoona Mirror (August 6, 1949).

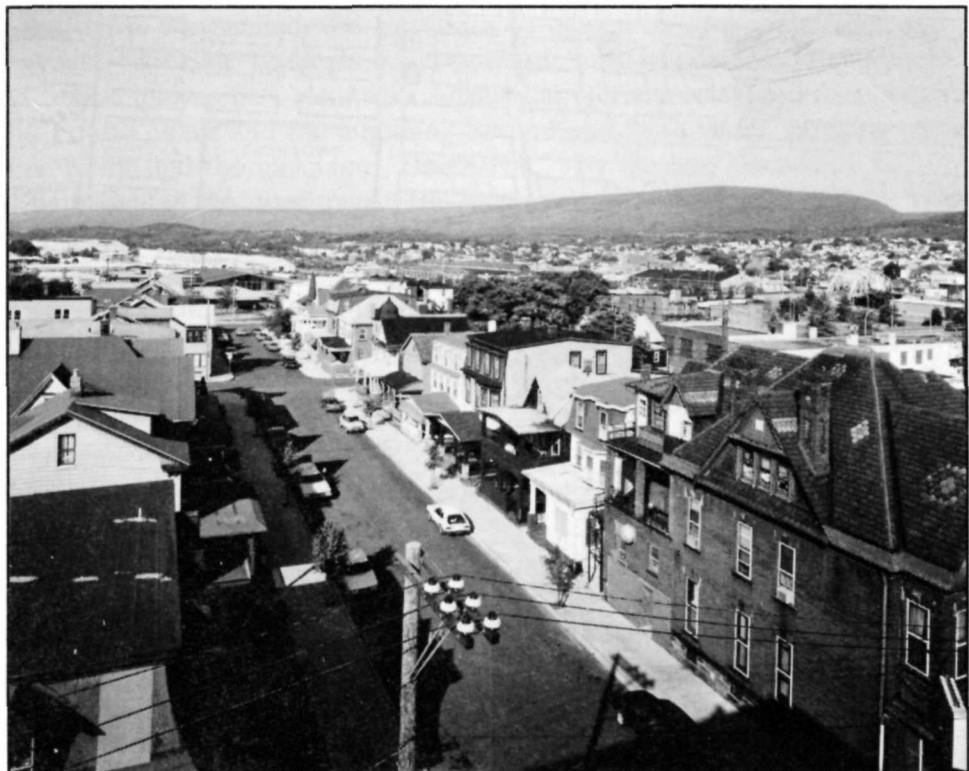


Fig. 4.41 View east/northeast from the roof of the Altoona Gymnasium in the First Ward, overlooking the 700 and 800 blocks of Lexington Avenue.

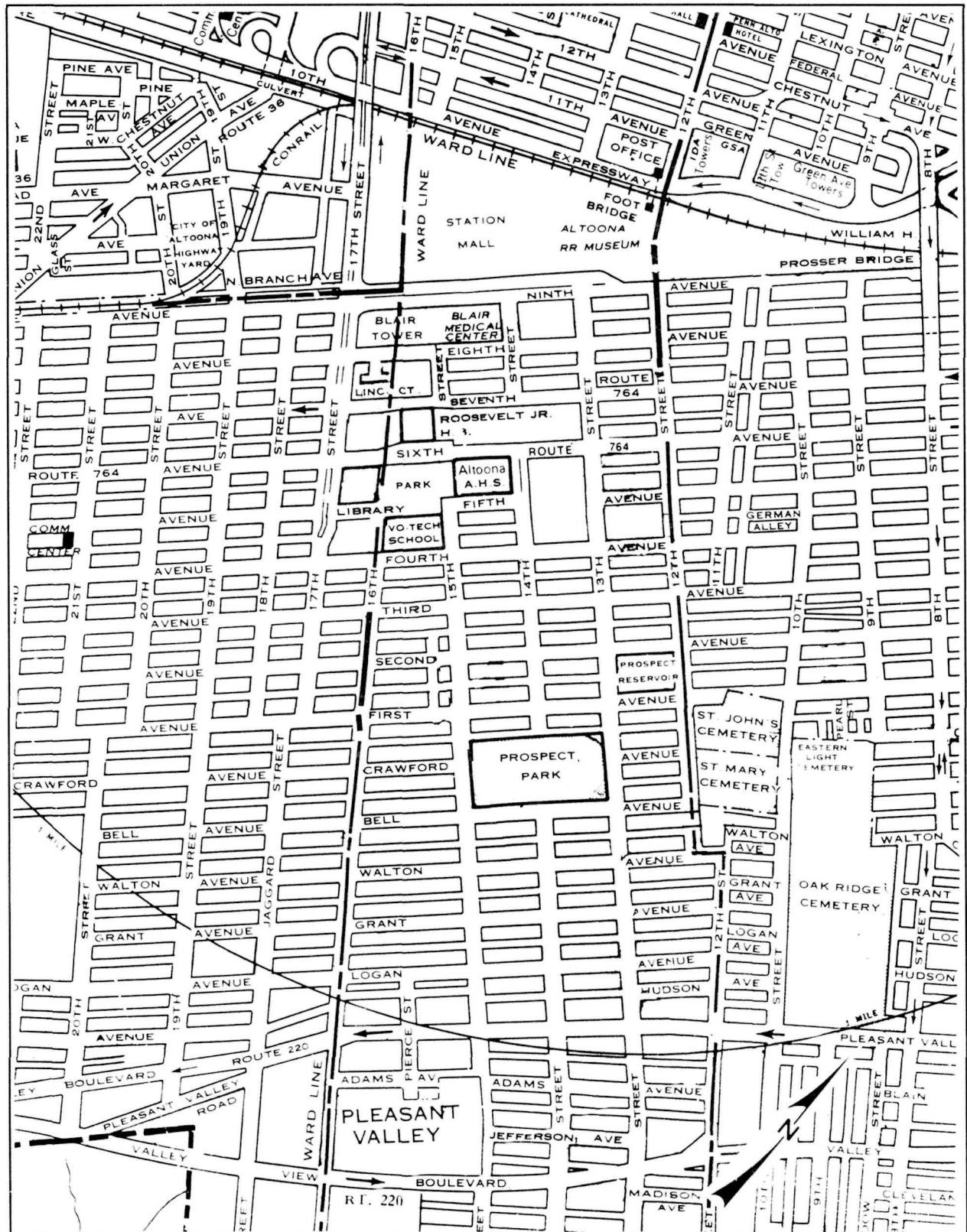


Fig. 5.1 Detail of map of Altoona. The Fourth Ward survey was limited to the area between 12th and 16th streets from 9th Avenue to the alley between 1st and Crawford avenues.

## FOURTH WARD

by Susan Garfinkel

*I write of men and women who came on the iron rail from the east to the west [to] the new railway village at the base of the Allegheny Mountains . . . . Their names are not found in "Who's Who." Their special acts have not been memorialized in bronze or marble. . . . These were homesteaders in the most effective manner. Everyone of them purchased the property in which he lived and settled down to the task of paying for it. Through thrift and economy he was at last successful.<sup>1</sup>*

Altoona's East Side developed both as opposition and complement to the city's commercial center. The original plan of Altoona (Fig. 2.1) shows two gridded areas approximately equal in size, separated by railroad tracks and the extensive PRR shops. The identity of each area grew more distinctive with time, due to conceptual differences and to the physical separation created by the tracks and shops in the central valley.<sup>2</sup>

The old East Side, with the Fourth Ward at its heart, became a primarily working-class neighborhood of modest family homes. A short row of company housing built on 8th Avenue in 1853 first marked the East Side as a residential area for PRR employees.<sup>3</sup> Compared to surviving houses in the First Ward area, those in the Fourth Ward tend to be modest in size and style. Yet the East Side quickly grew to encompass more than just houses. As transportation across the tracks was limited, the East Side developed its own commercial and institutional structure where East Side residents could purchase most goods, attend church, the theater or school, and find employment.<sup>4</sup> Altoona's substantial German immigrant population settled primarily in the Fourth Ward and the adjoining Second and Sixth wards, bringing to the area a distinctive ethnic flavor and the nickname "Dutch Hill." By the late nineteenth century, 8th Avenue may well have rivaled the downtown 11th Avenue as a conceptual center for the city.

Set on a hill rising over the city, today the Fourth Ward is physically divided into several sections, each quite distinct in character (Fig. 5.1). At the top of Prospect Hill, from 1st to 4th avenues, the area is heavily and almost completely residential. Here, the remaining core of a

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<sup>1</sup>Rev. William M. B. Glanding, "Eighth Avenue When the City Was a Village," Altoona Tribune (January 15, 1916), sec. 3, 3.

<sup>2</sup>From 1850-54 the PRR ticket office was located on 9th Avenue, spurring development on the east side of the city, but when the PRR's track across the Alleghenies was opened in 1854, the new main line ran along 10th Avenue. A new train station and hotel decided the west side's role as commercial center. The track along 9th Avenue became a branch line to Hollidaysburg. George A. Wolf, ed., Blair County's First Hundred Years (Hollidaysburg, Pa., 1945), 27.

<sup>3</sup>In the early years, at least, the area was home to management-level employees, including Andrew Carnegie and Samuel Vaclain, as well as skilled workers. Edgar Custer, No Royal Road (New York: H. C. Kinsey & Co., 1937), 2. Anna and Louis Leopold correspondence with Kim E. Wallace, August 17 and September 12, 1990.

<sup>4</sup>Crossings over the shops and tracks have consisted, over time, of some combination of one or two vehicle bridges, a foot bridge, and street cars.



larger nineteenth-century neighborhood survives. Past the 1st Avenue survey boundary and over the hill into Pleasant Valley, houses are newer and less densely placed. Between 4th and 6th avenues a complex of schools—including an elementary school, a vocational school, the Altoona junior and senior high schools, and the public library—over the years has replaced many of the residential structures in this section. Large public buildings and open spaces set the tone. Below 7th Avenue intermittent residential buildings continue to mix with churches and a variety of commercial structures. The steep grade has leveled out, and a row of 8th Avenue churches and the Station Mall (on the former site of PRR shops) predominate.<sup>5</sup> The recent 17th Street highway serves both as access into the area or an effective bypass around it.

Over time, Altoona's Fourth Ward has proved to be an area turned primarily inward on itself. At its height, this East Side neighborhood, with its layered residential, institutional, and commercial components—rivalled the downtown as a focus for the city. Yet, this role has diminished over the years. East Side establishments may have once duplicated the functions of those found in the downtown, but the area never superseded the city's commercial center. Only the presence of the high school, or particular ethnic establishments, turned citywide attention to the Fourth Ward. While the neighborhood's well-being lies in the strength and focus of its community, community vitality has always been dependent on the city of Altoona as a whole. As a working-class, ethnic neighborhood, the Fourth Ward has been selectively focused, existing primarily to serve the shared needs of its particular residents.

### **John Wright and the Fourth Ward Plan**

When Altoona was laid out on the site of David and Susannah Robeson's farm in 1849, the East Side ran approximately from what are now 9th to 4th avenues and from 12th to 16th streets. This area, with the addition of the blocks from 4th to 1st avenues, was designated as the Fourth Ward in 1868.<sup>6</sup> The gridded layout is like other parts of Altoona. Main parallel avenues are intersected at even intervals by perpendicular streets, while alleys paralleling the avenues provide service access to the backs of lots. As the distance between streets is much greater than that between the avenues, distinctive streetscape types developed. Individual plots were oriented to face the unbroken avenue frontage, marking the intended site of community interaction and formalized presentation. Houses were built accordingly, and neighborhood development reinforced a focus on the avenue streetscape. Streets served a secondary function for the neighborhood, as access to the avenues and as thoroughfares into and out of the area. Alleys provided informal access to individual homes.

Each structure in the Fourth Ward was built on land that once belonged to Jane and Archibald Wright. Irish immigrants and residents of Philadelphia, Wright and his wife are most

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<sup>5</sup>These sections within the Fourth Ward are now formalized through zoning designations that reflect historical patterns of use and development as well as current perceptions of the area. *Zone Map of Altoona* (1983).

<sup>6</sup>The next annexation to affect the Fourth Ward was made April 3, 1905, and consisted of an area bounded by Crawford Avenue alley and Walton Avenue, 12th to 16th streets. Another on March 30, 1906, added 12th to 16th streets, Walton to Bell avenues. Three other annexations that brought the Fourth Ward to its present size were made in the 1920s: April 19, 1921--14th to 15th street, Grant Avenue to Grant Avenue alley; January 2, 1928--13th to 14th streets, Grant Avenue alley to Walton Avenue; January 7, 1929--12th to 16th streets, Bell Avenue to Polk Avenue. The survey area of this study included only the pre-1905 boundaries. "Great Expansion Record Shown by City Since 1868," *Altoona Mirror* (June 13, 1939).



often associated with the founding of the city of Altoona, yet their son, John, should probably receive this credit. John Armstrong Wright worked as an engineer under J. Edgar Thompson in Georgia before becoming a member of the first PRR board of directors. From 1848-68 he supervised the Freedom Iron Works near Lewistown, Mifflin County. The 1923 Encyclopedia of Pennsylvania Biography claims that:

Mr. [John] Wright laid out the city of Altoona, Pennsylvania, the original deeds being in his name. The shops there maintained by the Pennsylvania railroad are built on ground presented by him to the company.<sup>7</sup>

While the first deed to Altoona is in fact in his parents' names, a deed of 1850 appoints him "as true and lawful attorney to grant, bargain, and sell that tract or parcel." Archibald and Jane Wright transferred their property to John in 1858.<sup>8</sup> It is John Wright's name that appears in connection with the development of Fourth Ward and the distribution of property within it.

As agent and owner of East Side properties, Wright had the potential to shape and control development in this part of Altoona. His policy appears to have been straightforward: from the earliest date, lots in the Fourth Ward were generally sold individually or in small parcels that were later broken up. Today, most houses rest on a half-lot 25' along the avenue front and 120' back to the alley. Common variations occur when a wider house sits on a 50' lot, or when a single corner lot is developed with several houses facing the longer street-front side of the property. Such variations, though, were mostly the choice of individual owners and builders. Wright was not an Altoona resident, and it is not clear exactly how he, or his agent, Clement Jaggard, handled the business of land distribution.<sup>9</sup> Successive maps of the area show that development was heaviest closest to the railroad tracks and moved progressively outward. Though certain lot locations may have been more socially desirable, Wright's tax records indicate that all subdivided land was considered of equal value.

## PRR Influence

More formative to the East Side's development was the proximity and influence of the PRR. The earliest photographic view of the shops shows a fledgling residential East Side in the distance (Fig. 2.6). Although PRR-built workers' houses were sold to private owners at an early date, the pattern for development of a workers' neighborhood was firmly established.

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<sup>7</sup>Thomas Lynch Montgomery, ed., Encyclopedia of Pennsylvania Biography (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Company, 1923), 14: 85-7.

<sup>8</sup>Most histories of Altoona suggest that the entire Robeson farm, purchased by Archibald Wright in April 1849, was immediately incorporated into the city, however, the area from 1st to 4th avenues is not accounted for. The 1858 deed listed by their letter designations the blocks in the original plan extending to the present 4th Avenue. It also described a tract "adjoining lands of \_\_\_ Bell \_\_\_ Hileman & others & the Town of Altoona aforesaid & laying South East of the said Town & containing \_\_\_ Acres more or less," that apparently was the area between 4th and 1st avenues that was incorporated into the city by 1868. Although deeds in the tract refer to a plot plan of this addition "A" to Altoona, no plot map or associated deed filed for the area could be found. Altoona tax assessment records show John Wright taxed for the first time in 1869 for "Plot of ground formerly outside the City Limits." By 1871 the area was described as seventeen acres "in common" suggesting that it had not yet been developed. In 1877, a new lot-by-lot enumeration of Wright's holdings was included in tax assessment records. Deed books: C/321, I/1-3.

<sup>9</sup>Tax records specifically listed Clement Jaggard as agent to John Wright in the years 1886-90, then listed Couch & Morgan subsequently. Couch & Morgan continued as agents for the Wright estate after 1892.

Altoona is not strictly a company town, since the PRR did not assume overall responsibility for the city's infrastructure and housing stock. PRR influence in Altoona was filtered, instead, through an independent municipal structure and through private individuals--developers, builders, PRR workers, and other city residents--who took up the task of creating a residential environment.

The railroad shops were technically part of the Fourth Ward, ensuring that direct ties to the neighborhood continued. The intersection of work and home sites is seen in the East Side location of the Brotherhood of Railway Trainmen meeting hall, designed by Altoona architect D. George Puderbaugh and built in 1914 at 8th Avenue and 10th Street. The PRR provided the area with its first firehouse near the shops at 9th Avenue and 12th Street (later relocated at 1231 6th Ave. as the Good Will Fire Company\*). Likewise, the first telephones came to the homes of East Side residents at the instigation of the PRR. In 1907, 165 telephones were installed in area homes to more efficiently call train crews to work; some 200 trainmen lived in what was known as "the First Calling District"--the area from 7th to 17th streets and from 1st to 9th avenues. Because "the experiment proved so successful," a second calling district was equipped within a few months, placing 220 phones in the area from Kettle to 7th streets and from 1st to 9th avenues.<sup>10</sup>

#### Fourth Ward Residents

The occupational and class homogeneity of Fourth Ward residents, and the importance of the PRR as an employer, emerges from a comparison of tax-assessment records. Altoona taxes were based on occupation: to determine tax owed, the local Fourth Ward assessor used occupation to place each area resident into one of six flat-rate categories. By dividing area residents in this way, the assessor has provided a key to perceived relationships between occupation and socioeconomic class in Altoona's Fourth Ward.

In 1878 the assessor encountered a total of 414 taxable residents (Fig. 5.2). He assigned only

Classes of Occupations in the Fourth Ward, 1878			
	Rating	Occupations	Number
1st	125	banker, brewer, contractor, doctor, foreman, merchant	10
2nd	100	attorney, blacksmith, boiler maker, butcher, cabinet maker, car builder, carpenter, clerk, coal merchant, conductor, engineer, foreman, lumber dealer, machinist, merchant, moulder, painter, pattern maker, shoemaker, stone mason, teacher, tinner, etc.	241
3rd	50	blacksmith, boiler maker, brakeman, carpenter, clerk, fireman, laborer, machinist, minister, moulder, painter, printer, shoemaker, tinner, weaver	160
4th	40	laborer	1
5th	30	gentleman	1
6th	10	none given	1
Total			414

Fig. 5.2 Classes of Occupations in the Fourth Ward, 1878, from tax-assessment records.

\*An asterisk following a building name or address indicates that illustrations and more detailed information on the building can be found in the building summary at the end of the chapter. Building summaries are organized alphabetically by street name or number.

<sup>10</sup>J. Simpson Africa, *History of Huntingdon and Blair Counties, Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia: Louis H. Everts, 1883), 152. *Altoona Charter Centennial* (Altoona, 1968), 25.

one resident to each of the three lowest categories. One-hundred-sixty residents were ranked in the fourth category; of these, 128 were laborers. The rest fell into a number of skilled positions: there were six brakeman; six clerks; three shoemakers; two blacksmiths, firemen, ministers, moulders, and painters; one boilermaker, machinist, printer, tinner, and weaver. Of the thirteen different occupations in this category, ten could have been encompassed by the PRR.

Classes of Occupations in the Fourth Ward, 1901			
	<u>Rating</u>	<u>Occupations</u>	<u>Number</u>
1st	300	doctor, lawyer	8
2nd	200	agent, chemist, coal operator, contractor, doctor, editor, food inspector, foreman, grocer, insurance agent, merchant	44
3rd	150	engineer	2
4th	140	baker, blacksmith, boiler maker, brick layer, cabinet maker, car builder, car inspector, carpenter, chemical engineer, clerk, conductor, engineer, fireman, machinist, minister, moulder, painter, pattern maker, plumber, policeman, stone mason, telephone operator, tinner, etc.	477
5th	100	janitor, laborer, teamster	215
6th	20	invalid, retired	41
Total			787

Fig. 5.3 Classes of Occupations of Residents in the Fourth Ward, 1901, from tax-assessment records.

The majority of Fourth Ward residents, 241, were taxed in the fifth occupational category in 1878. Carpenters (150), machinists (47), blacksmiths (23), moulders (21), engineers (16)--all skilled occupations needed by the PRR--accounted for most of these men. Merchants (12) were the largest group among the remaining occupations. Represented in smaller numbers were boilermakers, clerks, conductors, foremen, patternmakers, and tinner. Only ten residents were ranked in the highest category. They included a banker, brewer, contractor, doctor, and a merchant; the remaining five were foremen.

The 1901 tax assessment records show an increase and maturing of the Fourth Ward population (Fig. 5.3). The number of taxable residents rose from 414 to 787, and the lowest tax category included fifteen invalids and twenty-three retirees. The overall population shifted downward in rank; this time the assessor placed the majority of residents in the fifth (215) and fourth (477) categories. He placed only eight residents in the highest tax category, forty-four in the second highest. This downward shift may reflect changing attitudes toward the relative prosperity of Altoona's working class. It may also indicate an upper-end increase in status for the neighborhood's elite. The records reveal a continued PRR dominance. Significant increases in the number of machinists (111) and clerks (70) in the third category and of laborers (207) in the fifth, indicate the company's growth as jobs increased in record keeping, and in both technical and unskilled areas.

While research in the First Ward and in Altoona as a whole has shown the city to have a fairly homogeneous, native-born American population from its start, there were significant areas of ethnic concentration. Of the immigrant groups that came to Altoona, Germans were among the most numerous. They settled on the East Side, particularly in the Fourth Ward,

which popularly became known as Dutch Hill.<sup>11</sup> By the late nineteenth century, the majority of Fourth Ward residents were German; German churches, schools, social clubs, and commercial establishments grew in the area to meet their needs.

Most German immigrants were newly arrived from Europe; the majority came to work for the PRR. As the seventy-fifth anniversary history of St. James German Evangelical Lutheran Church explains:

Mechanics were needed to man these [railroad] shops . . . ; those who had learned their trades in Europe were the most sought after. German mechanics were especially welcomed because of their ability, diligence and application. These Germans wrote to relatives and friends in the old country, telling them of the favorable outlook. This, in turn, caused much immigration in the [1850s], which continued to the turn of the century.<sup>12</sup>

Once they arrived, however, many German immigrants found jobs in support occupations such as grocer, butcher, baker, shopkeeper, seamstress, and hotel proprietor. These catered to the needs of a growing, family-based, multi-generational community. In time, many German women found employment in Altoona's two silk mills. Established residents often served as sponsors to new immigrants, introducing them to the community networks, providing a place for them to stay, and helping family members find jobs. In the absence of extended families, sponsorship helped to foster kinship-like ties within the immigrant community.

It has been argued that ethnic ties develop in opposition to the unfamiliar new surroundings of the host country.<sup>13</sup> A range of institutions emerged to bring the Fourth Ward ethnic German community together. The United Church of the Brethren, St. Mary's Catholic Church\*, and St. James Lutheran Church\* were established especially for the German population. Altoona is a place of many clubs and social organizations, and Germans were instrumental in creating and joining these groups. As an essay on "Social Life in Altoona," explains:

Clubs attract many of the German people of both sexes, and lodges and secret societies draw largely on the male members of the community, while theater going is a popular amusement with young and old of both sexes so far as they can afford the necessary expense.<sup>14</sup>

Specifically German organizations included the Concordia, Frohsinn, and Maennerchor Singing Societies; the Altoona Turgemeinde, a gymnastics group; the Bavarian Hall, the Swiss Rifle

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<sup>11</sup>17th rather than 16th Street is the more familiar southern boundary of the Dutch Hill area. Germans of Bavarian origin tended to live in the area from Crawford Avenue to Pleasant Valley, while Germans from other areas lived on 1st through 4th avenues.

<sup>12</sup>"Seventy-Fifth Anniversary of St. James Evangelical Lutheran Church, 1861-1936," 21.

<sup>13</sup>Abner Cohen, ed., "Introduction: The Lesson of Ethnicity," in *Urban Ethnicity* (New York: Tavistock, 1974), ix-xxiv. Frederick Barth, ed., "Introduction," in *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries* (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1969), 9-38. Anya Peterson Royce, *Ethnic Identity: Strategies of Diversity* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982).

<sup>14</sup>Charles B. Clark, *Illustrated Altoona* (Altoona, 1896), 128.

Club, Unter Uns Club, and Truchtenverein. Many of these met in buildings on the East Side. The Frohsinn's building at 9th Avenue between 11th and 12th streets was described in 1896 in Illustrated Altoona:

the second and third stories . . . are arranged as a theater, and the building is now known as the East Side Theater. Occasional plays are produced here, sometimes by home talent and at other times by traveling troupes, the rates being usually 30 cents for seats and, of course, the plays are such as are usually produced by low-priced companies.<sup>15</sup>

Although not always flattering, this description does reveal a citywide understanding of the German community's shared social and economic status. Several building and loan associations, most notably the Germania and Teutonia, catered to the special needs of the German population.

Altoona's German immigrants adapted both to American society and to the culture of the area's pre-existing German populations. In popular thought, the Pennsylvania Germans, or "Pennsylvania Dutch" are members of certain sectarian groups such as the Amish and Mennonites.<sup>16</sup> Pennsylvania German culture is more accurately a complex of practices that developed through the interaction of many German groups in an American context over 300 years of influx and change. It includes a distinctive German dialect and variations in the preparation of food, and the development of hybrid Protestant denominations. In Altoona, the continued influx of native-born Germans kept the issue of ethnicity in delicate balance. German residents sought to maintain the culture of their origins, yet systematically placed their churches, clubs, organizations, schools, neighborhoods and neighbors into already-established Americanized structures.

At the turn of the century, a number of Italian immigrants came to Altoona and settled at the northern border of the Fourth Ward. Following the pattern of their German predecessors, Italians tied their community to a set of distinctive religious, commercial, and social institutions. In building an ethnic Catholic church, Our Lady of Mt. Carmel\* at 8th Avenue and 11th Street, working-class Italians, like the Germans at St. Mary's before them, built in stages. A cornerstone was laid in 1912, the building completed in 1923, and the mortgage paid off in 1950. In 1920, the Italian National Bank was established in a building across the street; today it stands next to the Italian-American Grocery. Social organizations included the Christopher Columbus Society, Italian-American Citizens' Society, San Donato Society, Crown of Italy Society, Abruzzese Society, and the Roman Ladies Political Society.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>15</sup>Ibid., 130.

<sup>16</sup>Of Swiss or Palatine origin, these sects maintain a separation from general society along with a distinctive "plain" style of dress and selective rejection of modern technology.

<sup>17</sup>Our 75 Years Together: Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish And Franciscan Friars, T.O.R. (Tappan, NY: Custombook Inc., 1985), 10-19. "Italian Bank to be Opened in Altoona," Altoona Mirror (May 3, 1920); "Italian-American Groups Aid in Advancement of Altoona," (August 12, 1949); "Count Ranuzzi Opens Consulate," (December 3, 1912).



## Housing Stock

At the base of the Fourth Ward's neighborhood vitality are hundreds of residential structures--the houses and homes of Altoona's working classes. When the PRR built the first of its eight company houses on the East Side in 1853:

It stood quite isolated, being almost the only house in the neighborhood. . . . The land between it and the railroad was unenclosed common, a portion of which was marshy, while a stagnant pond occupied a part of its area. To cross this common in the daytime required caution, and after dark necessitated a lantern.

But by 1883 this local historian could report that these same blocks were "now solidly occupied by fine residences, lawns, shrubbery, and gardens--not only these, but for many squares beyond, into what was formerly a considerable woods."<sup>18</sup> Such reminiscences of Altoona's rapid development abound. As one writer reported in 1916, "Altoona has passed through several periods or ages," ranging from the age of mud, to the age of wood, to the present age of brick and cement.<sup>19</sup> In his recollection, the author suggests a series of dramatic transformations in which the frontier-like company town became a comfortable middle-class city.

Single-family houses make up the vast majority of surviving Fourth Ward structures, followed in number by multi-family units which are often free-standing double houses. Most of these structures are unique, built by individual private owners. Contractors or investors built a few small groups of identical houses in the Fourth Ward, but larger scale tract development was more common elsewhere in the city.

While most Fourth Ward houses are free-standing single-family structures facing on 25'-avenue-front lots, there are variations in this pattern. Most common are double-wide houses, attached double houses, and houses facing the street side of corner lots. In other cases, an auxiliary house on the back of a corner property was built facing the alley's edge (208 14th St.\*, 210-212 14th St.\*). Corner lots in general are the most frequent site of exception and variation within the pattern of uniform domestic development. Almost every corner has a double or large house (1537 2nd Ave.\*, for example), a local business or a small alley house.

A profile of the typical Fourth Ward house can be developed from aggregate survey information. It is two-and-a-half stories with a side-gable or cross-gable roof, wood-frame, from 20-25' wide, occupies a single lot, was originally sided in wood but now is covered with aluminum or vinyl, and dates from ca. 1890-1900. A somewhat less typical neighbor retains its original siding, which may be either wood cladding or a brick veneer. Fourth Ward houses do, of course, represent a full range of types, from the smallest gable-front house at 1509 4th Ave.\* dating from 1870, to the large style-bearing house built at 1329 8th Ave.\* as a doctor's home and office in 1888 and now used as a funeral home. But these few are exceptions, making up about 18 percent of the total sample. The neighborhood housing pattern, with its large number of mid-range homes, supports Altoona's claim to being a city of the working middle class.

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<sup>18</sup>Africa, 140.

<sup>19</sup>Glanding, Altoona Tribune, sec. 3, 3.

Almost all domestic structures encountered in the Fourth Ward survey area can be divided among several formal groups. Almost all residences are two-and-a-half stories tall, although some have only crawlspace-sized attics, some have full third floors, and a few of the newest are one-story ranch houses. Side-gable houses are most often three bays wide--although two-bay examples are occasionally found--and are almost always configured with a main door at one or the other side of the front facade (Figs. 5.11-12). Cross-gable houses are substantially similar, with either a centered or asymmetrical cross gable adding late Victorian interest to the roof line. These cross-gable houses and contemporary side-gable examples are more likely to have ornate porches, bay windows, towers, or other ornamental features in keeping with late-nineteenth-century stylistic trends (Fig. 5.4). A small number of gable-front houses are usually two bays wide, while gambrel-front houses from the early twentieth century are wider and have three bays across the front. Entrance doors are again offset at one side. Mansard and hipped roofs are occasionally present, particularly on some of the larger style-bearing houses built by wealthy individuals; several mansard-front roofs are also found in imitation of the more complete and more expensive examples (Fig. 5.5, also 117 15th St.)\*) Some hipped roofs represent the only modest gestures toward Colonial Revival styles found in the Fourth Ward area (Fig. 5.6). Aside from these major groups, characterized by roof type, a number of very small houses are best characterized by size rather than form, as are another group of exceptionally large and substantial houses. These two groups in aggregate make particular economic statements about segments of the Fourth Ward population.

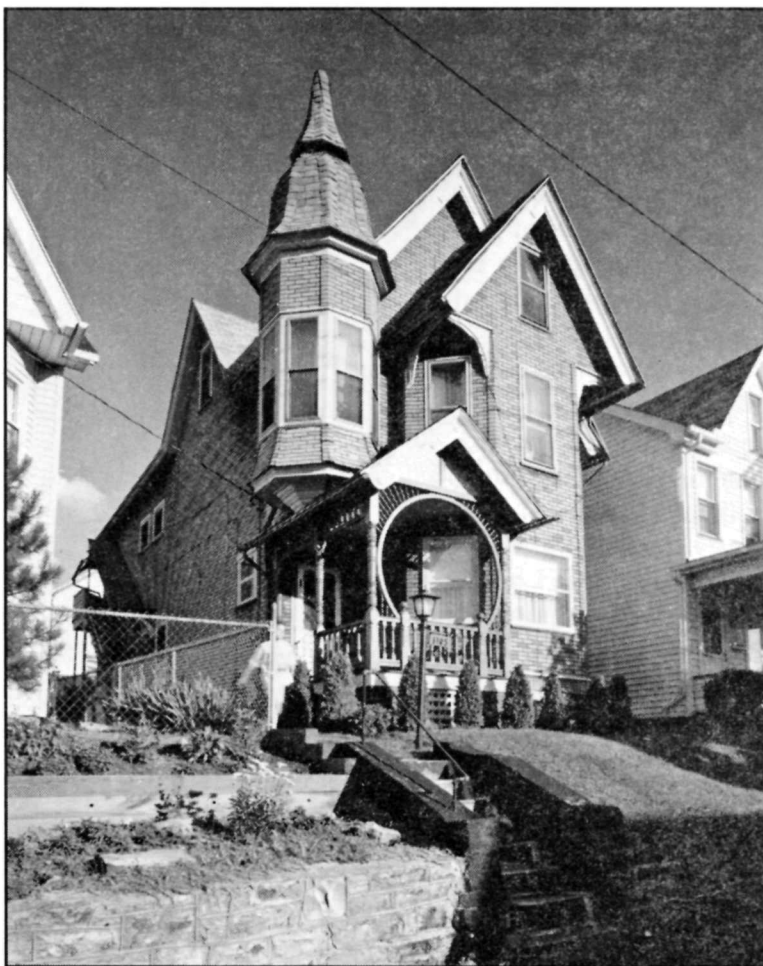


Fig. 5.4 1105 3rd Ave., an example of the few Fourth Ward houses with more elaborate late Victorian details.

The overwhelming majority of houses surviving in the Fourth Ward, 73 percent, are side-gable and cross-gable types. Of these, side-gable houses predominated, at 44 percent of the total housing stock. Gable-front houses, more typically considered an urban form, are relatively scarce, although when gambrel-front houses are added to this total, it begins to have significance (18 percent of surviving housing stock). As the nineteenth century progressed, first

side-gable and later cross-gable types were preferred for new building in the Fourth Ward area. The largest group of new side-gable houses appeared in 1888-94, while the largest group of cross-gable houses appeared in the years from 1894-1909. This is in keeping with general architectural trends throughout the United States.

Side-gable houses predominate over time. Buildings in the survey were dated using a series of insurance maps that set time periods for the area: pre-1882, 1882-88, 1888-94, 1894-1909, 1909-32, 1932-51, 1951-68, and post-1968. In each period, the most common form of new construction that has survived is the side-gable house. This predominance is most striking in the earliest pre-1882 period, where 55 percent of surviving houses from that time have side gables. Few houses



Fig. 5.5 1300 block of 3rd Avenue with a sampling of roof types, including cross-gable and mansard-front.



Fig. 5.6 1426 and 1424 3rd Ave.

built in 1882-88 survive. In the next large group of survivors, dated 1888-94, 53 percent of the surviving houses are again side-gabled, followed by 26 percent that are cross-gabled in type. By 1894-1909, the number of side-gabled houses has dropped to 42 percent; by 1909-32 it is down to 26 percent. In place of side-gabled houses, the percentage of gable-front and gambrel-front structures increases, from 12 percent in 1894-1909 to 35 percent in 1909-32. Only one house in the survey was built between 1932-51; it is a gable-front house.

Data available is for surviving houses only, and does not take into account homes that were built in the Fourth Ward area and subsequently demolished. Yet, certain conclusions can still be drawn about patterns of new construction. The small number of surviving houses built between 1882-88 (4 percent of total), and the large number built in the next six-year span (28 percent of total) shows that there was a significant building boom in the eastern part of the survey area; the front line of heavy settlement had just then reached the area above 4th Avenue. Likewise, the increasing number of cross-gable houses (15 percent pre-1882, 26 percent 1888-94, 37 percent 1894-1909) corresponds to familiar stylistic trends in domestic vernacular architecture. A cross-gable is a primarily cosmetic feature added to a basic side-gable house; it provides some additional light and floor space in the upper or attic floor but

does not in itself represent a major conceptual shift (Fig. 5.7). The increase in gambrel-front houses (Fig. 5.8) during the 1910-20s is likewise a marker of changing architectural style.



Fig. 5.7 1224 3rd Ave., a cross-gable variation on Altoona's basic three-bay, side-gable house form.

Almost every domestic structure in the Fourth Ward, more than 95 percent in total, is wood frame. This includes most of the brick examples (81 percent), which are actually wood frame with a brick veneer. Almost all other frame houses were originally sided in wood. Many of even the smallest houses were decorated with extensive Victorian trim often referred to as gingerbread or carpenter Gothic; original wood siding was most often novelty or drop siding, having a decorative groove along the top edge of each board that creates a shadowed effect. Today, aluminum siding is the predominant exterior material (28 percent). Other frequently found replacement siding materials include: vinyl, cement asbestos,



asphalt sheet or shingle, and formstone. Twenty-three percent of the surviving houses still have wood siding. While some concrete block appears in replacement foundations, concrete or stone building materials are almost exclusively confined to church and school buildings.



Fig. 5.8 1420 and 1418 3rd Ave., examples of the gambrel-front house form.

Of course, attention to surviving houses tells us as much about attitudes of later Altoona generations toward maintaining and/or altering the built environment as it does about initial intentions. We cannot simply assume that a statistically random group of houses has been demolished--there may well be patterns of selective demolition and replacement at work. More of the area's oldest

houses, for example, have been torn down because of the commercialization of 6th, 7th and 8th avenues, and because of the expanding schools along 4th and 5th avenues. More selective patterns of demolition have remained elusive. Yet, we must recognize that the survey shows us most of all which houses from which time periods are still acceptable to Fourth Ward residents.

The history of Fourth Ward houses is one of adaptive re-use over time. Beyond the replacement of windows, roofing material, siding, and other exterior materials, a variety of structural alterations can be found in the houses. Hallways are removed, ceilings dropped, shed additions built. Some exterior changes are more dramatic. One unusual looking house, for example, started as a gable-front and was later raised to a full three floors and sided with vinyl. The mansard-like front section still has a triangular projecting molding outlining the former gable. In a stretch of side-gable houses along 3rd Avenue (1308 3rd Ave.\*), each has received a unique treatment as dormers and gables of different shapes have been added. One is a shed dormer, another a gambrel dormer, another a false cross gable. Several structures, including 1210 3rd Ave. (Fig. 5.9), started life as double houses and through the addition of gables and changes in window and door placement over the years, have taken on a unified single-dwelling form. The brick-veneered house at 1329 4th Ave.\* was moved one lot over from its original corner site; its main entrance was moved from the avenue front to the 14th Street side.





Fig. 5.9 1210 3rd Ave., originally a double house.

Sometimes structural changes have been the direct result of changes in a building's use. What is now a double house at 1313-15 3rd Ave.\* in 1900 was the hall of the Maennerchor Singing Society. The pitch of the roof, overall lack of ornament, and placement of the structure at the rear of the lot all indicate its former function. A small house at 208 14th St.\*, situated at the alley behind 2nd Avenue, at the turn of the century was a one-story butcher shop. The second floor seems to have been added as part of its conversion in the 1920s. At 1430 2nd Ave., a large three-story mansard-roofed house has been converted to apartments, with an awkward three-story brick porch structure added to the chopped-off front of the original building. Many houses in the more commercial areas on 7th and



Fig. 5.10 1338-26 2nd Ave. A row of porches.

8th avenues have been converted from domestic to commercial uses; more dramatic is the conversion of the fire station at 1231 6th Ave.\* into a restaurant. In the residential areas, houses such as 1424 2nd Ave.\* that once were neighborhood grocery stores have been converted to back houses, yet maintain the evidence of additions and former shop windows.

There are porches on almost every house (Fig. 5.10); it is hard to know how many were original, as they are not pictured on early maps and many were built or rebuilt well after the houses were constructed. Some porches appear to be original (Fig. 5.11), others--particularly the many brick examples (Fig. 5.12)--were added in the twentieth century. A porch provides a semi-public and semi-private transitional



Fig. 5.11 1329 3rd Ave., one of the typical three-bay, side-gable houses with its original porch and cornice details.

space, specific to a house and its residents yet not as potentially intimate as access to its interior. The use of such a space fits in with practice in the current Fourth Ward community, where in general people know their neighbors a little but not too well and don't often enter each other's houses. Today--in the summer at least--many area residents are found on their porches at various times throughout the day. Longtime area residents have explained that even in the 1920s, visiting between neighbors most often occurred in these outdoor/indoor spaces.<sup>20</sup>

Comparison of the floor plans of two typical Fourth Ward dwellings, dating from different decades of the late nineteenth century, provides some insight into the structuring of interior domestic space in Altoona working-class homes. The Bentley House, 1509 4th Ave.\*, was built by 1870 and is one of the oldest homes studied, while the Healy House at 1415 3rd Ave.\* (see Fig. 2.15), dating from 1895-96, is typical of the generation of houses built between 1894-1909. The comparative elaboration of the Healy House--it is larger and includes internal passages--may be due to its later date. Changing conceptions of domestic space correspond to

<sup>20</sup> Author's interview with Ida Ficker and Bertha Duffy, August 18, 1989. The prevalence and similarity of 1920s brick porches deserves further research to determine if a specific contractor and/or a municipal initiative accounts for their frequent occurrence.

Altoona's maturing as a city. Both houses exhibit elements common to domestic structures found in a diversity of urban settings.

The side-passage house has often been considered a typically urban form; that is, many more are found in urban rather than rural settings. Most often such a house has a front-gabled orientation--it is, in effect, half of a four-room, central-passage house turned sideways to accommodate the narrow arrangement of lots found in most cities, including Altoona. Yet the Healy House, like many in the Fourth Ward, has a side-facing gable despite its internal side-passage plan--this is one reason that so many Fourth Ward houses abut their neighbors so closely. The Bentley House, by contrast, has a front-facing gable end, but no passage.



Fig. 5.12 1430, 1428, 1426, 1424, 1422 3rd Ave. The two houses in the foreground have more recent brick porches.

The Healy House survives in remarkably original condition (exterior and interior are unaltered), perhaps because it stayed in the family of its original owners until 1986. Inside are three main rooms arranged front to back off a side entrance-and-stair passage at right. A parlor/living room at front connects to a dining room and then to a kitchen which, along with a service porch, stretches across the back of the house. The three rooms

are almost square and approximately equal in size, ranging from 13' to 14'-6" on a side. The overall width of the house is 18'-4"; 4 feet comprise the side passage.

The Bentley House is one of the smallest in the Fourth Ward survey; it is only 12'-9" across the front facade. Two rooms deep with a one-story kitchen-shed extension and two bedrooms above, it has no interior passageways. Nearly equal in depth to the Healy House on the first floor, the Bentley House has the same layout minus the important addition of a side passage. Rooms in each have similar function and relational placement, and are approximately equal in size. While access in the Bentley House is obtained only through direct passage from one room to the next, use of the passageway in the Healy House is optional as first-floor rooms interconnect. If 4 feet in width were added to the Bentley House in the form of a side

passage, the plans of the two would be equivalent.

Folklorist Henry Glassie and scholars building on his work in vernacular architecture have suggested that the inclusion of passages in homes signals an increasing recognition of inhabitants' need for individual privacy.<sup>21</sup> Glassie distinguishes between open and closed plans --open forms being those where direct access is not mediated by privacy-creating passageways. While this single comparison of the Healy and Bentley houses cannot support systematic statements about use of space or privacy in Altoona's working-class homes, both open and closed interiors are found and they may correlate to the period in which a house was built. Inclusion or exclusion of a hallway may also indicate cultural background or economic status.

It is easier to identify the owners than the builders of Altoona's private working-class houses, about which little history is written. Patterns of ownership and residence in the Fourth Ward are typical of a close-knit immigrant community. Especially through the 1930s, East Side residents tended to stay within the immediate neighborhood, coming to the Fourth Ward from nearby blocks. Even when they assumed the role of landlord, most continued to live in the area. On the East Side a seemingly disparate network of private individuals rose to the task of building domestic structures. Through a variety of approaches, they shared a single activity--providing homes for railroad workers and their families.

### **Residential Development**

While most individual builders in the Fourth Ward remain anonymous, it is possible to trace some developers and architects. The success of a variety of enterprises was helped in part by an ongoing emphasis on individual home ownership in Altoona, and by the hands-off approach of the PRR.<sup>22</sup> John Wright was one of the first to deal in houses ready for sale. While he usually sold vacant lots, the four houses that he owned in 1884 along the south side of 15th Street are an interesting exception (see 1506 2nd Ave.\* and 205 15th St.\*). These two-and-a-half story, three-bay, side-gable houses are a type that is quite common in the Fourth Ward neighborhood. They were sold by Wright to individual Altoonans in the same manner as many of the unimproved lots.

Large tracts of land for extensive development were usually not available. Wright died in 1891; after continuing to deal in individual lots until 1913, his heirs eventually sold the remaining Fourth Ward property--"about 2 acres Vacant hills & stone 1515 to 35 2 ave"--to the contracting firm Hoyer and Kring. It is responsible for the 2nd Avenue row of six identical gambrel-front houses (1515 2nd Ave.\*) built two to three years later.

At times, the development process was closely interwoven in East Side community life. In 1900, the firm Bunker & Fleck bought a corner lot on 2nd Avenue and built three identical houses facing 13th Street (see 200 13th St.\*). These were sold individually six months later.

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<sup>21</sup>Henry Glassie, *Folk Housing in Middle Virginia: A Structural Analysis of Historic Artifacts*, (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1975) 120-21, 190.

<sup>22</sup>In 1916 an advocate of Altoona's German community highlighted its role in boosting the city's home-ownership rate and its tax revenues: "the home-seeking instinct of the German race is incontestably demonstrated in our city. Most of its citizens own properties and are heavy taxpayers." *Altoona Tribune* (January 15, 1916).



The third house at the alley, 206 13th St., was transferred to George Klesius--a contractor himself who was also choir director at St. Mary's German Catholic church for more than forty years. Klesius, who ran a heating and sheet metal firm, made a business of sponsoring German immigrants and settling them into newly constructed homes. By bartering labor with other contractors, Klesius helped promote his small-scale developments. If ten houses were being built, for example, he would provide the sheet-metal work in all ten in exchange for ownership of two. He then financed the sale of these homes to German immigrants through articles of agreement.

Klesius's personal influence was wide and well-recognized. A plot-plan of lots he owned, just east of 1st Avenue on Walton, Crawford, and Bell avenues was filed in the Blair County Courthouse in November 1918. He traded land actively, making fifty-five purchases between 1892-1918, and selling a total of 104 separate parcels within those same twenty-six years. Klesius also donated land for the expansion of Prospect Park.<sup>23</sup> In 1950, the Frohsinn Society--of which he was a long-time member--presented him with a special deed giving him "an absolute life interest" in the building of the "Ancient, Honorable, Transcendental and Effervescent Order of the Harmoniously Discordant, Disorderly and Mangy group of Thespians of the Frohsinn Sing-Sing Society of the City of Altoona, County of Blair and State of Intoxication." This interest was granted "with the Exception that he may not use, sell or mortgage the property, land, buildings or contents, minerals under ground, water ways, timberlands, etc." Klesius's role as an community leader is thus clearly tied

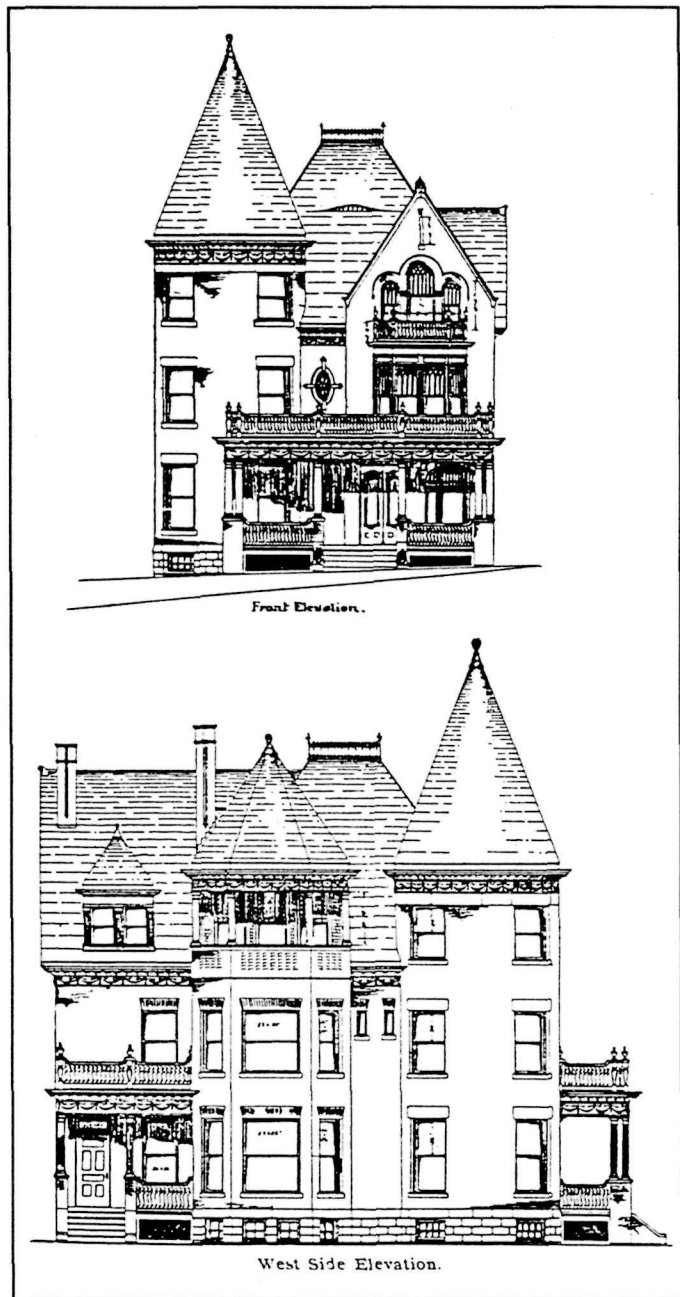


Fig. 5.13 Thomas Gift House, 416-18 11th St., elevations from 1893 Beezer catalog.

<sup>23</sup> Author's interview with George Sheedy, grandson of George Klesius, August 18, 1989. "Plan of lots on George A. Klesius Property Situated in the Fourth Ward in the city of Altoona, Pa., November 1, 1918," Plot book 3/198. Index to deed transactions. "Property to be Acquired from George A. Klesius for Extension of Prospect Park," City Engineer's Office, Altoona, Pa., January 24, 1920, collection of George Sheedy.





Fig. 5.14 Thomas Gift House, 416-18 11th St., a Beezer Brothers design.

to an interest in real estate; the joking tribute suggests that he was well-liked and admired in this dual capacity.<sup>24</sup>

In contrast to Klesius's broad-based community role as a builder, there is less evidence of professional architects working in the Fourth Ward. Most notably, two houses in the survey area and another just beyond were designed by Altoona architects Michael and Louis Beezer in the early years of their practice. Looking quite out of place among its neighbors, the Queen Anne-style house at 1331 2nd Ave.\* was built for Lawrence Kimmel, Jr., a successful grocer and the son of a German immigrant. When Kimmel's fortunes changed, his wife and children went to work at the silk mills, in part to help pay off the house.<sup>25</sup> A Beezer house at 1205 6th Ave.\*, one of the few to share a party wall in the surviving sample, was built for Joseph Nixon, Jr., in the late 1890s.

Another Queen Anne-style Beezer house just outside the survey area at 416-18 11th St. was built for Thomas Gift (Figs. 5.13-14).

Non-residential structures, used and experienced jointly by neighborhood residents, provide further insight into collective approaches to the built environment over time. Longtime area residents attest to the importance that neighborhood institutions--language-based ethnic clubs, local commercial establishments, schools, churches, parks, cemeteries, and swimming pools--contributed to a sense of community. They provided a site for shared experience, tying together physical neighbors through a network of shared activities and identifications.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>24</sup>Special Warranty Deed. From the Frohsinn Sing-Sing Society To the Honorable (More or Less) Georgius Adamus Klesiusinsky," June 7, 1950. Collection of George Sheedy.

<sup>25</sup>Author's interview with resident Kimmel descendent, August 7, 1989. City directories.

<sup>26</sup>Interview with Ficker and Duffy, August 18, 1989.

## Commercial Development

Interspersed among the homes in the residential sections of Fourth Ward were a variety of locally oriented commercial structures. Despite the draw of department stores and shopping malls in other parts of Altoona, several neighborhood businesses from the turn-of-the-century remain and serve as focal points for daily activity.

The most common small-business form to survive is the neighborhood grocery. Still operating as the I & K Grocery, the brick-veneered storefront structure at 1224 2nd Ave.\* was built by Henry Schmitt in 1907. It has variously been known as Smitty's, and Albert's, and Graham's Grocery; it also functioned as a branch of the A & P chain during the 1920s. Other groceries were built into the fronts of pre-existing houses, though most have since been converted back to a solely domestic function. Examples include the Huber House\* at 1424 2nd Ave. (for another view see 1426 2nd Ave.\*) and 1222 3rd Ave., formerly Ficker's Grocery and a landmark for members of the German community.<sup>27</sup>

Other small commercial establishments included several barber shops, such as the alley-fronting shed at the rear of 1200 3rd Ave.\* Beahm's Garage\* at 206 16th St. is a neighborhood establishment which, before it switched to car repairs in 1953, served as a wagon and blacksmith's shop. The Belmar Hotel\*, established in 1904 at 1501 14th Ave., still operates as a local tavern.

Beyond the influential PRR shops, several smaller concerns brought industrial character to the area. In particular, breweries and bakeries were established by members of the German community, and were found primarily in this part of Altoona. Altoona breweries located on the

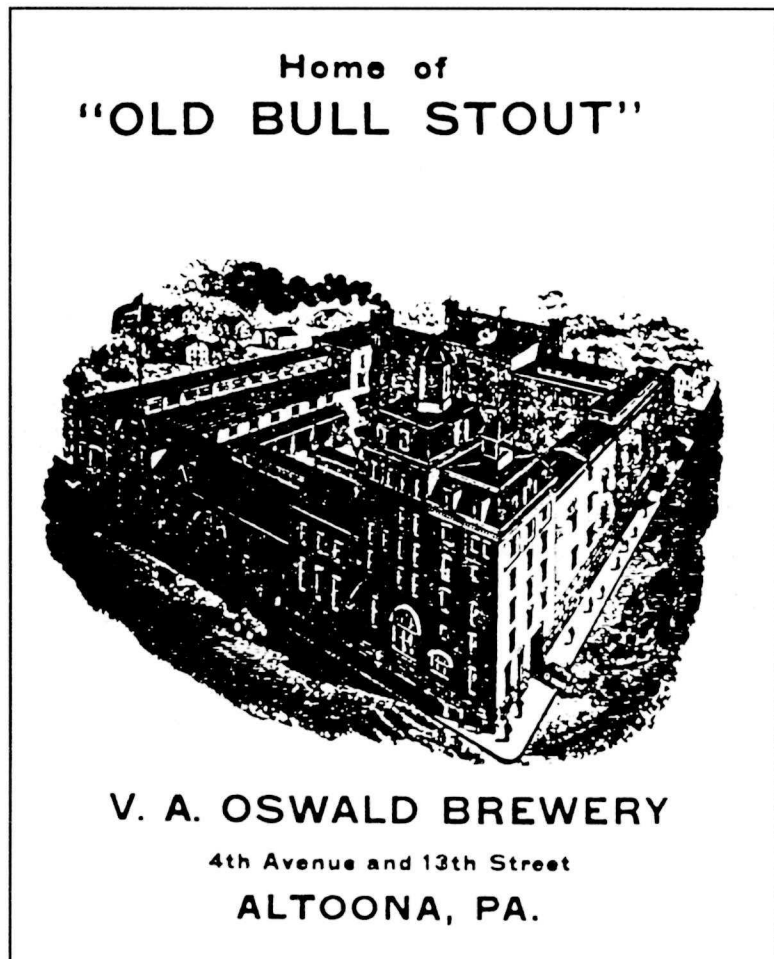


Fig. 5.15 Oswald's Brewery, ad from the "Fiftieth Anniversary of the Frohsinn Singing Society."

<sup>27</sup>Interview with Ficker and Duffy, August 18, 1989.

East Side of the city once included the Kasmeier Brewery and the Oswald Brewery at 4th Avenue and 13th Street; an important component of the historic landscape has disappeared. Situated in the midst of residential sections, these buildings often made up extensive complexes (Fig. 5.15) that would have contributed distinctive smells, noise, and activity to the neighborhood. The only surviving brewery structure is a single brick-veneered stable from the Union Brewery, located at 1425-1/2 4th Ave.\*

Two major bakeries were also located in the Fourth Ward--again both were operated by German immigrants. Surviving at 1206-10 5th Ave.\* is the building from Haller's Eagle Bakery, operated first by John Haller, then, from 1903-78, by his sons. The bakery was large and successful, as attested by frequent articles in the Altoona Mirror; during the Depression years of the 1930s, Haller's was declared Pennsylvania's "model bakery."<sup>28</sup> The 5th Avenue building is currently leased by Pacifico Bakery, which uses it as a distribution center. The Altoona Steam Bakery, operated by A. J. Heess at 8th Avenue and 13th Street in the late nineteenth century, is no longer extant. That bakery was described in 1883 as "perhaps the most extensive and best-equipped establishment of its kind between Philadelphia and Pittsburgh."<sup>29</sup>



Fig. 5.16 Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Italian Catholic Church, 1012 8th Ave., interior.

## Churches

East Side churches were built as an institutional response to both the spiritual and social needs within a residential community. An Altoona citizen in the 1916 anniversary issue of the Altoona Tribune reported that:

In my recollection, the first religious effort in Altoona was the Sunday School conducted by the United Brethren in a room at the corner of 8th Avenue and 13th Street, where

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<sup>28</sup> Altoona Mirror files.

<sup>29</sup> Africa, 143.

the 8th Avenue Methodist Episcopal Church now stands.<sup>30</sup>

Despite this claim, the majority of Altoona's first religious institutions formed on the west side of the city. Surviving churches in the Fourth Ward survey area represent a second phase of development within Altoona.

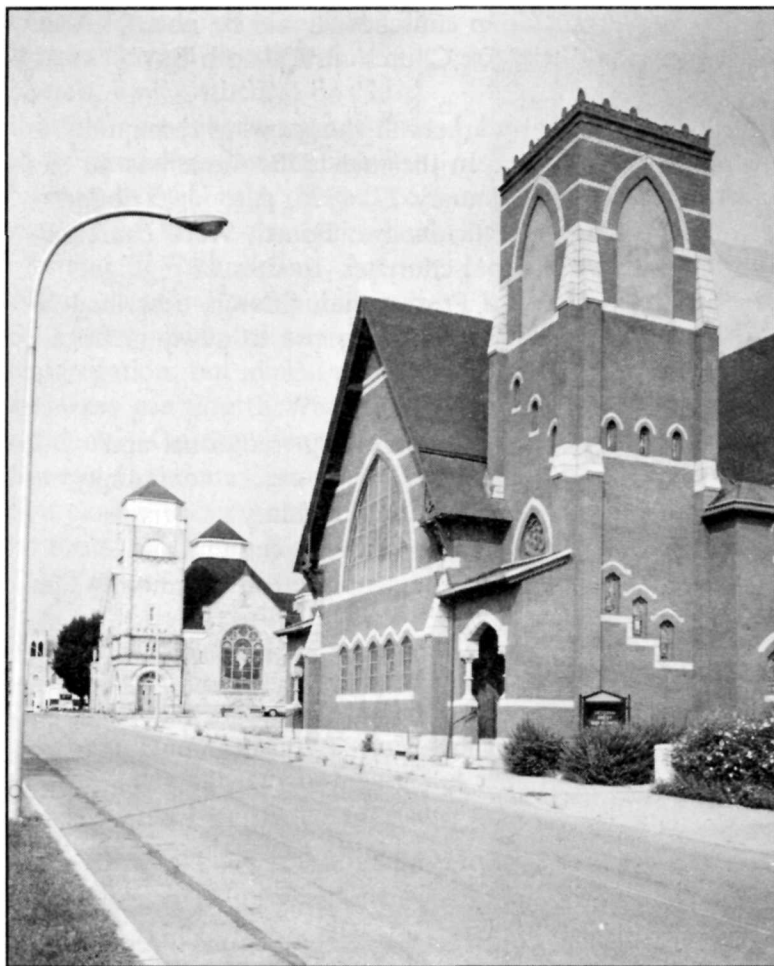


Fig. 5.17 East side of 8th Avenue: Second Presbyterian, foreground; Methodist Church, middle ground (St. Luke's Episcopal opposite it but not visible); tower of United Brethren, background.

Since Catholic, Methodist Episcopal, Lutheran, and Presbyterian churches were already established west of the tracks, the development of East Side institutions attests to both the fast growth of Altoona and to the unique ethnic composition of the Fourth Ward neighborhood. Of the six surviving churches studied, three--St. James' German Lutheran, St. Mary's German Catholic, and Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Italian Catholic--developed in direct response to the needs of non-English-speaking immigrant communities (Fig. 5.16). Others--both the Methodist Episcopal and Presbyterian churches--were specifically built to help accommodate growing numbers of East Side Altoonans. All but St. Mary's Catholic Church are located on the commercial 8th Avenue within a block or two of each other (Fig. 5.17); St. Mary's is on 5th Avenue, perhaps symbolically closer to the heavy area of German settlement.

Fourth Ward churches survive as the oldest group of religious structures in Altoona, since most in the downtown commercial district were rebuilt in the early twentieth century. St. Mary's was begun in 1871, the Second Presbyterian Church was built in 1870-71 and 1875-77; St. Luke's Episcopal was built in 1881-82, and St. James' Lutheran's current structure dates from 1889-90. The 8th Avenue Methodist Episcopal Church was rebuilt on the site of an earlier structure in 1902.

By 1896 there were sixteen churches on the East Side; half of these were located along 5th Avenue. Seven of the East Side churches were in the Fourth Ward; all were housed in

<sup>30</sup>H. H. Gibson, "Deer Caught on Eleventh Avenue" *Altoona Tribune* (January 15, 1916), sec. 3, 4.

permanent brick or stone structures.<sup>31</sup> They included: Bethel Church of God (5th Avenue and 13th Street), St. James German Evangelical Lutheran Church\* (1401-05 8th Ave.), Second (later Eighth Avenue) Methodist Episcopal Church\* (1227-31 8th Ave.), Second Presbyterian Church\* (1315 8th Ave), St. Luke's Protestant Episcopal Church\* (8th Avenue and 13th Street), St. Mary's Roman Catholic\* (1401 5th Ave.), and First United Brethren Church (5th Avenue and 12th Street). The dominant German ethnic composition of the area is clear, though the presence of the Anglo-Episcopal and Presbyterian churches should be noted. Also located in the ward in 1932 was St. George's Syrian Orthodox Church at 809 15th St.

While churches are important as ethnic and social markers in the growing community, their appearance may also have local historical significance. In the mid-1870s there was an evangelical religious revival in Altoona. An article in the January 27, 1876, Altoona Tribune refers to the "Great Awakening" of recent past, citing in particular two Fourth Ward churches--the Second Presbyterian and 8th Avenue Methodist Episcopal churches--as sites of nightly filled-to-overflowing prayer. The construction of the Second Presbyterian Church, described in the December 18, 1876 edition of the Altoona Mirror, occurred in response to newly modern and progressive attitudes toward religion and its place in society.

Accounts of construction of two area churches illustrate competing traditional and modern attitudes toward church institutions and church buildings. In one case a community provides for itself; in the other, its perceived needs are provided for. St. Mary's German Catholic Church\* was built in the 1860-70s and was completed in 1883. A centennial anniversary article describes the integral role that building the church played in community life.

For the actual construction of the Church, all labor was performed by the members of the parish. Even the ladies contributed to this effort. After their day's toil in the Railroad shops, the men would come directly to the church site and excavate for the foundations, or perform whatever tasks had been laid out for them. The ladies would bring the men their meals, so no time was lost. Then the following day, after the men had returned to their labors in the shops, the ladies would haul away the dirt and debris.<sup>32</sup>

In time the congregation built a school and social hall, as well. This bottom-up, shared-work ethic contrasts sharply with the attitudes underlying the construction of the Second Presbyterian Church\* just a few years later. Thinking toward the future rather than tradition, congregants first built a large chapel in 1870-71, attaching a large and stylistically sophisticated sanctuary to the structure in 1875-76. A church member explained that:

As a church we have sought to be alert, enterprising, wide-awake and quick to embrace every opportunity of advancing the Master's cause. If the modern amphitheatrical audience room is better calculated to reach the masses than one constructed on the gloomy medieval style, we have said to our architect give us the circular seats and the

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<sup>31</sup>Several churches were located to the north of the Fourth Ward and are centered around 5th Avenue and 5th Street. In 1896 these churches were mainly housed in their original frame structures.

<sup>32</sup>"St. Mary's Parish--How It Started," Altoona Mirror files.



slanting floor . . . .<sup>33</sup>

In this conception, the church is built in the spirit of introducing improvements and a new focus to the pre-existing community.

Today, both strains of church identification remain. The former Second Presbyterian church, now Cathedral of Christ the Good Shepherd, relates little to its immediate community--its leaders, in fact, have caused local scandal for their reinterpretations of standard Catholicism. As Altoona's only Episcopal church, St. Luke's maintains a large congregation, but almost no members are Fourth Ward residents. On the other hand, St. James's Lutheran Church is still tied closely to the community and its roots, as are St. Mary's and Our Lady of Mt. Carmel.

Increasing access to transportation has broadened the area of daily Altoona activity; most Fourth Ward residents travel beyond the area's boundaries on a daily basis. In addition, ethnic ties have weakened as native-born generations of Altoonans reach maturity. Thus, the secular communal institutions once prevalent in the area are mostly

gone--their built forms have gone with them. The original Concordia and Frohsinn Halls were both destroyed by fire. Concordia was rebuilt as a low modern structure, while Frohsinn moved across the tracks to a vacant building on 12th Avenue. Once this area was rich with such structures--in 1896 they included Block's Hall, Concordia Hall, Emerald Hall, Frohsinn Hall, and Logan Hall.<sup>34</sup> Today, the Memorial Hall of St. Mary's Church is a sole survivor.

Throughout most of its history, the East Side has been viewed as an area of working-class neighborhoods. This conception has shaped past perceptions, actual development over



Fig. 5.18 Cast-iron sidewalk drain at 1314 2nd Ave.

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<sup>33</sup>Altoona Mirror files.

<sup>34</sup>Illustrated Altoona, 128, 130.

time, and continues to shape perceptions of the area today. Between 1889-96, when the city implemented a street-paving program, forty-one streets and avenues were paved across the city. All but five were on the city's west side. As the home of PRR workers, the Fourth Ward prospered when they did, and likewise it declined with the company: the loss of jobs following the demise of the PRR has had a so far unrepaired effect. Much of the Fourth Ward is today considered a "blighted area" by city and county governments. The area continues to suffer the effects of rearranged business to domestic inter-relationships. Ethnic identification has lessened with passing generations. A fiftieth anniversary history of the Frohsinn Singing Society lamented the decline of tradition: "the existence and growth of the German song could not be doubted, were it not for the decrease of the German immigration."<sup>35</sup> Altoona's Fourth Ward now faces a lost support network that has not been replaced in the minds of residents or government.

Yet, if church services in German or Italian have ceased, other strains of neighborhood vitality continue. At least one pastor reported renewed interest among younger church members, something that is much needed among congregations where the median age is past middle age. Other sites of neighborhood activity include the



Fig. 5.19 Fourth Ward streetscape, southeast side of 1300 block of 2nd Ave.

I & K Grocery, Prospect Pool, and the recently converted Firehouse Foods in the old fire station. Churches, stores, club buildings, schools, and parks are landmarks of the local community. Supporting these structures and lining the East Side's hills are hundreds of houses built in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Built to maintain a focused community they, like their residents, are more alike than they are different. As tangible connections to the Fourth Ward's and Altoona's past, they are also homes for a community of people living in the present. They help us more fully understand the links between the Fourth Ward's historic strengths as an Altoona neighborhood and its future as a viable residential community.

<sup>35</sup>Clark, 61-2. "Fiftieth Anniversary of the Frohsinn Singing Society," 1939.

## FOURTH WARD BUILDING SUMMARIES

(in address order)

### Jacob and Pauline Neher House 1325 1st Ave.

Built 1897

**Description:** The unusual shape of this frame house is probably original, as it resembles the outline on the 1909 Sanborn map. A two-story side-gable house is intersected by a narrower two-and-a-half story gambrel-front pavilion: the two forms share the house's northern exterior wall. The entrance door to the house is in that part of the two-story house exposed on the front facade, set back slightly at the right front edge of the house. An unusual two-story projecting bay starts at the center of the front facade, projecting diagonally outward to the left (thus catching a southern exposure) and leveling off parallel to the front; it has no diagonal return to the corner of the house.

The Neher house is sided in narrow horizontal novelty wood, except for the front facade below window level, where, below a molding, the wood siding is vertical. Flat window surrounds are capped with a squared pediment of molding above a single sawtooth strip; first-floor windows are extra tall. A cornice molding runs along the projecting bay at two-story height to the base of the gable of the gambrel roof. The gable front has a triple window, and is decorated with alternating sets of rows of plain and hexagonal shingles. The porch and its foundation have been altered.

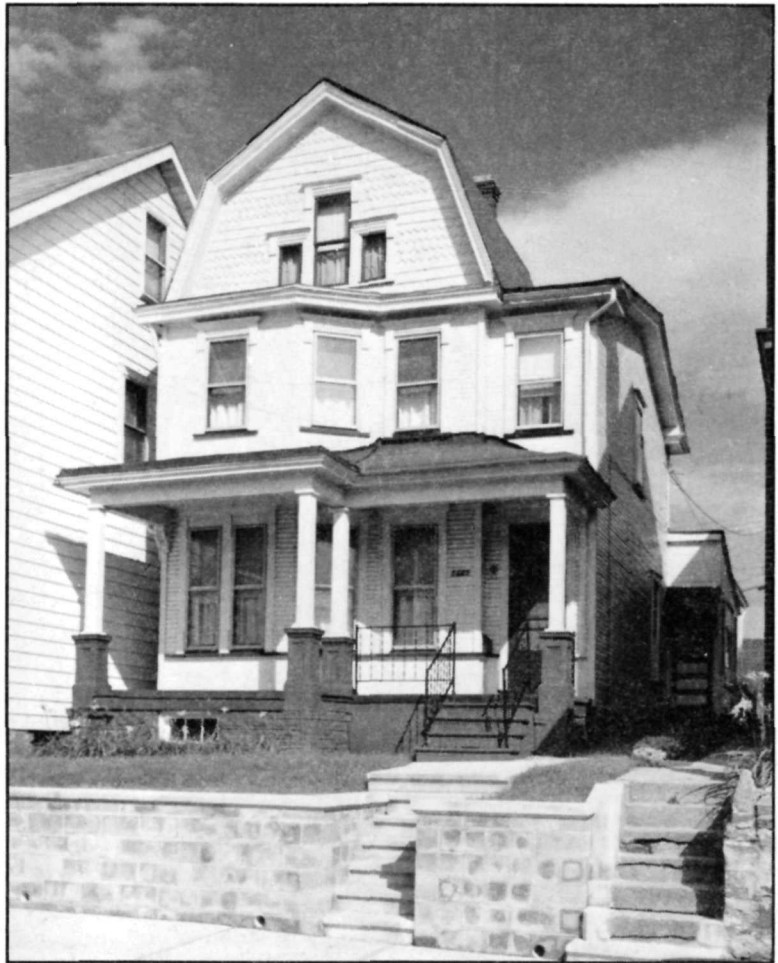


Fig. 5.20 Jacob and Pauline Neher House, 1325 1st Ave.

**History:** Following a Fourth Ward pattern of long-term ownership, the Neher house has belonged to only two families during its history. John Wright's heirs sold the 25' x 120' lot on which this house rests in 1897 to Jacob Neher of Altoona, a stonemason who lived here with his wife Pauline. According to tax records, he first owned this half-lot with "small house" at 1325 1st Ave. in 1897, when it was rated at \$600. By 1904, Frieda Neher, a daughter, also appeared in city directories, working as a clerk at Kline Brothers. Emma Neher appeared as a weaver at the Altoona Silk Mills in 1912. Jacob Neher died on February 4, 1914, and in that year Frieda, then also a silk worker, was the only family member resident in Altoona. In 1919, Emil Neher, a laborer, was the only family member listed.

Jacob Neher's heirs--Emil C. Neher, Mrs. Emma T. Files and Orville Files and Frieda Pauline Files--sold the property to Calvin R. Knisely on January 22, 1923, for \$2,100. By 1925, Knisely, a sheet-metal

worker, and his wife, Frieda P., lived at the house. They continued to live here through 1960, when he was listed as an employee of the PRR. Calvin Knisely died intestate in December 1963; title was transferred to Frieda, who died in 1977, and then to her two children who still own the property.

Sources: Maps: 1882, 1909. Deeds books: 116/158, 305/172. City directories. Tax assessment records.



Fig. 5.21 John M. and Martha S. Filer House, 1508 1st Ave.

John M. and Martha S. Filer House  
1508 1st Ave.

Built 1901-02

Description: This two-and-a-half-story, frame house has a gabled, front ell. Its ornamental and formal features make it visually interesting. The ell, with its Palladian-like triple window, projects slightly on the right facade of the house. A bracketed cornice defines the lower edge of the side-gable roof and outlines the front gable of the ell, forming a strong triangular shape and emphasizing the

geometry of the house. The entrance is in the side-gable section of the facade; at right a triple picture window has a molded arched transom with overlapping leaded arches within. Centered above the two triple windows is a double window in the second floor, decorated at the bottom with a flat Colonial-style bow.

The front porch is supported with simple square columns above horizontal wood siding and is old if not original. Formstone has been applied to the facade below the line of the porch roof. The rest of the house is covered with faux-brick asphalt siding.

History: Like many of the surveyed properties, the Filer house was built in the late nineteenth century by a working-class family for their own habitation. The half-lot that would become 1508 1st Ave., 25' x 120', was purchased by John M. Filer of Altoona for \$335 on May 11, 1901--it was one of many left by John A. Wright to his heirs. Filer, a laborer, first paid taxes for the half-lot and house, valued at \$1,000, the following year. In 1905, directories show that Filer was a machinist living at this address. By 1919, he is listed here along with Ralph E. Filer, a member of the U.S. Army. John Filer and his wife, Martha S., sold this lot "with buildings erected" to Alfred and Katherina Winkler for \$4,300 on July 21, 1922. Katherina Winkler died on April 1, 1930, and Alfred, a machinist, remarried to Bertha Winkler soon after. Bertha Winkler's executors sold the property to Joseph C. Lansberry for \$4,000 on March 14, 1974. Lansberry also made his home here.



Sources: Maps: 1894, 1909. Deed books: 121/619, 121/616, 130/329, 298/140, 396/133-135, 958/345. City Directories. Tax assessment records.

Annie and George  
Renner House  
1222 2nd Ave.

Built by 1890

Description: An example of the two-and-a-half-story, three-bay, side-gable type, the Renner House is interesting because it retains much of its original trim yet it also has an alteration common in the Fourth Ward, the addition of a later ornamental brick porch.

This frame house has an enclosed central chimney, an entrance door on the right front next to a wide

picture window (possibly added), and a first-floor bay window at the rear of the north side facade. The cornice is decorated with four evenly spaced sets of paired brackets and a horizontal strip of sawtooth decoration. Pairs of brackets support the return of the cornice at the base of each side gable. Window surrounds have projecting flat-topped pediments, here picked out in multi-colored paint.

The red-brick front porch, somewhat overbearing in its scale, has two square brick columns and front and side walls--the front wall has two arched windows into the basement and a row of sawtooth corbelling just below the white stone cap. The same saw-tooth design is picked out at the top of each column. The porch roof has a wide front-facing gable.

History: In Altoona's first years, lots were often sold repeatedly as part of speculative development. The land on which the Renner house rests rapidly changed hands several times. John and Emma Wright sold a parcel of four lots, 400' x 120', to John Thompson of Altoona on August 8, 1872, for \$1,000. On July 2, 1884, John Thompson and his wife Helen sold a full 50' x 120' lot to James McKerihaan of Altoona for \$400, indicating that the ground was still unimproved. In 1886, McKerihaan was a boilermaker, living at 1321 3rd Ave., also in the Fourth Ward neighborhood.

James and Faith McKerihaan sold a half-lot, 25' x 120', three years later in 1887 to Theophilus Schraf and Annie Renmark (See also 1327 3rd Ave.\*). On July 25, 1894, Theophilus and Frances Schraf sold their share to Renmark, now Anna Renner, for \$600--"with building thereon erected, No. 1222 2nd Avenue." Tax books seem to indicate that a house stood here in 1890; neither Renner nor Schraf is



Fig. 5.22 Annie and George Renner House, 1222 2nd Ave. (left).



listed in the tax book for 1889, but in 1890 Annie Renner has a house and lot at this address valued at \$1,000. Directories, however, show Annie Renmark, widow of Wolfgang, living here as early as 1888 along with George O. Renmark who worked in the roundhouse. Schraf does not appear in tax records.

Annie Renmark seems to have changed her last name without remarrying. She died intestate in 1899, and her son, then known as George W. Renner, lived here as a machinist in 1900 and a shophand in 1925. He married a woman also named Anna; this Anna Renner still lived at the house in 1951, after his death. Jean A. Graham, who worked as a clerk at Altoona Beauty & Barber Supply acquired the property on January 27, 1955, for \$3,200. Her two sisters, Leah E. and Mary M., lived at this address with her and ran the Graham Market next door (1224 2nd Ave.\*). Graham owned the property until 1988.

Sources: Maps: 1882, 1909. Deed books: 28/218, 59/275, 103/226, 700/333, 1157/135. City directories. Tax assessment records.



Fig. 5.23 Henry Schmitt Grocery Store, 1224 2nd Ave.

Henry Schmitt  
Grocery Store  
(I & K Grocery)  
1224 2nd Ave.

Built 1906-07

Description: Located amid the domestic structures along 1st Avenue, yet built in a commercial style, this two-story brick structure clearly marks itself as a neighborhood business. Currently the home of I & K Grocery, it has housed a variety of neighborhood grocery stores over the years. The owners and proprietors have often lived nearby,

members on two counts of the local community.

Built of brick veneer on a wooden frame, the first floor houses a grocery store while a door at the right front leads to a second-floor apartment. Glass display windows still flank the recessed store entrance, although they are now filled in with painted plywood above door height. Transom lights were once part of the entire storefront and apartment entrance door. Two large wood brackets joined by a slight projecting eave make a strong visual break between the commercial first story and the three-bay apartment above. In the second floor, windows are decorated with stone lintels and sills and a wide corbelled cornice rises to flat-topped parapet-like projections at each front corner. A small stone block with the number 1224 is centered above the central window.

History: Development in this part of the Fourth Ward was sufficiently late that no previous structure ever occupied the site of this turn-of-the-century commercial structure.

As tax records indicate, Henry C. Schmitt's vacant lot at 1224 2nd Ave. became a "store room" between 1906 and 1907. Sanborn maps suggest that brick casing was added between 1909 and 1932. Schmitt, a carpenter originally from New York City, acquired this lot in 1892 and lived next door at No. 1226 (previously numbered 1224) from 1896 until sometime between 1919 and 1921 Schmitt moved his home around the corner to 204 13th St. During the 1920s he stopped running the grocery himself, since by 1930 his occupation is listed as timekeeper. For a short time around 1936, the store served as one of many Altoona branches of the Great Atlantic and Pacific Tea Co, or A & P Store. In 1939, Paul W. Alberts was the grocer at this address; husband and wife George F. Cornet, a radio engineer, and Emily F. Cornet rented the upstairs apartment. Since Alberts was a branch manager for A & P in 1930, it is possible that he worked for them at this address before taking over operations. Residents in the upstairs apartment changed frequently. In 1951, Paul F. Greene, perhaps related to the Schmitt family, was the grocer here.

Henry Schmitt died May 29, 1939. In April 1954 his daughters Edna C. Wilson, a widow, and Bertha A. Green and her husband sold the half-lot containing the store to Leah H. and Mary M. Graham for \$5,500. The 1955 Altoona Directory shows Leah and Mary owning and running the Graham Market, living next door at No. 1222. In 1966, Leah E. Graham sold the store; it has been operated since by the present owner.

Locally, the store was known respectively as Smitty's, Albert's, and Graham's.

Sources: Maps: 1882, 1909, 1932. Deed books: 28/218, 28/224, 84/440, 85/440, 90/448, 689/533, 950/177, 844/582. City directories. Tax assessment records.

Maennerchor Singing Society Hall  
1313-15 2nd Ave.

Built ca.1890  
Altered 1903

Description: This two-and-a-half-story, gable-front double house, unlike most in the area, is set up on the hill and back from the avenue property line, with the rear of the building reaching the alley. Currently sided with aluminum on a wood frame, the house is almost entirely without ornament; it has no cornice or chimneys and minimal window surrounds. Two central side-by-side doors provide access to each half; there is a window to each side, four windows that line up across the second floor and a single window in

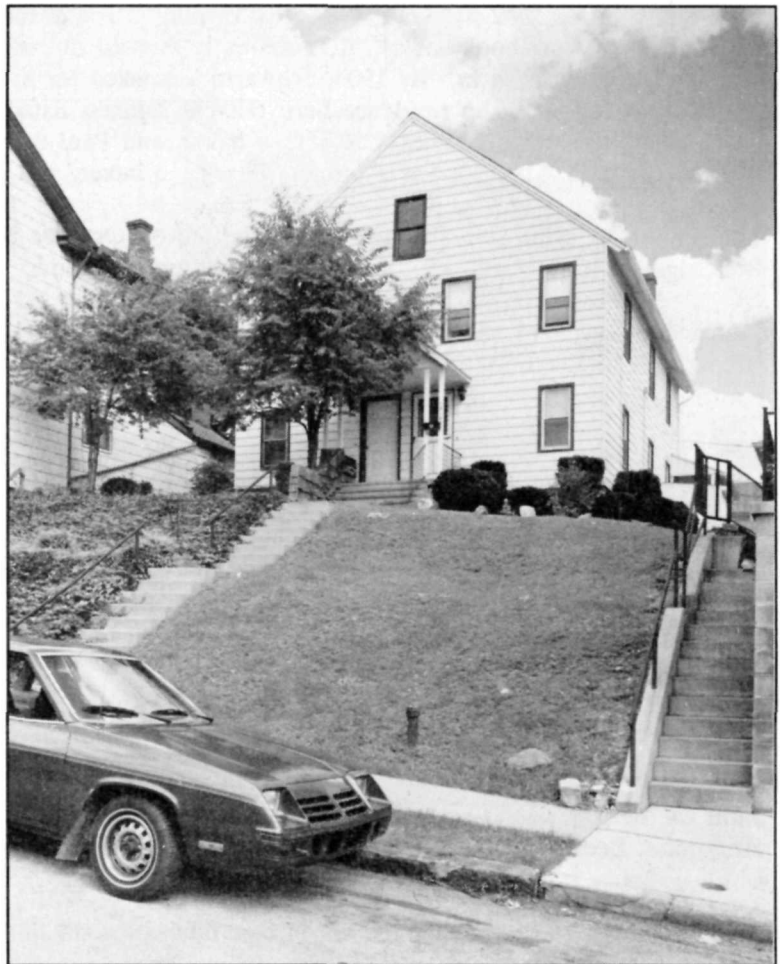


Fig. 5.24 Maennerchor Singing Society Hall, 1313-15 2nd Ave.

the third directly centered below the roof ridge.

The building is unusually small for a double house on this size lot (see 210-212 14th St.\* for comparison). This, coupled with the unusual relationship of the roof-pitch to width, belie the fact that it was originally built as a meeting hall. It was converted to a double house in 1903.

History: The early history of the Maennerchor Hall/Schwartz House is closely connected with the ethnic German component of the Fourth Ward community. In October 1882 a group called the Maennerchor Singing Society purchased a 50' x 120' lot from John and Emma Wright for \$600. In tax records the Maennerchor Hall first appeared in 1890, assessed at \$2,000. Although it was not listed in 1893, an 1898-99 city directory listed the Maennerchor Hall without street number on the south side of 2nd Avenue between 13th and 14th streets. On the 1894 Sanborn map the structure was designated as a chapel.

The Maennerchor Singing Society apparently experienced financial difficulties,<sup>36</sup> as the property was sold through a sheriff's deed poll on July 1, 1901, to the Teutonia Loan and Building Association. By October, Teutonia passed the property on to Leonhard Schwartz for \$1,200; at that time the property contained a "large one-story frame building used as a Hall and known as the Maennerchor Singing Society Hall."

Tax records suggest that Leonhard Schwartz, a tailor, quickly converted the standing structure into a double house. In 1902 he was assessed for owning "1 lot & old building" at \$1,000, "old manechor hall." The 1903 tax book shows this same entry crossed out in pencil with the words "changed over the building inside" written in. By 1904, Schwartz was taxed for a lot and double house worth \$2,200. Also by 1904, he had taken up residence here, with an address listed as 1313 2nd Ave. In 1912-13, other listed inhabitants were Charles Schwartz, a baker, and Paul Schwartz, a wrapper at Peightal's Bread Bakery. In 1915, Leonard was a farmer, Charles, a baker, and Paul, a student.

The house was again sold through a sheriff's sale on October 25, 1933, this time to the Standard Building and Loan Association, which probably used the house as a rental property. Liquidating trustees sold the property to Erma A. and David E. Omlor for \$1 in 1949. The Omlors lived at No. 1315 while David worked as a watchman for the PRR; in 1951 they rented No. 1313 to Millie Gray, a widow, and to Erma M. DeBernardis and her husband, Joseph, who worked as a knitter at Puritan Knitting Mills.

In January 1953, the house and lot became the property of Joseph E. and Della A. Shoenfelt for \$4,300. Twenty years later, the property was acquired by Improved Dwellings for Altoona, Inc., a non-profit organization, for a nominal fee. They sold one side of the double house to its present owners and still retain the other.

Sources: Maps: 1882, 1894. Deed books: 59/87, 132/308, 321/88-90, 372/497, 415/519, 602/490, 670/9, 945/36, 961/1100. City Directories. Tax assessment records.

Lawrence, Jr., and Caroline Long Kimmel House  
1331 2nd Ave.

Built ca. 1890  
Architects: Beezer Brothers

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<sup>36</sup> The Maennerchor society still exists and is now affiliated with Altoona's Bavarian Hall.

**Description:** The Kimmel house is unusual for the Fourth Ward in two important ways: it is much larger than the neighboring homes, and it represents an architectural style widely popular in Altoona but for its time almost absent from this part of the city.

Even at this level of architectural stylization, the Kimmel House is still constructed with a wood frame and brick veneer. In the French-influenced late Victorian style often called Queen Anne, it features a complex shape and roof line with a strong vertical thrust. The steeply hipped roof has a lower cross gable with projecting square bay at left, a hexagonal tower with faceted cone top at the corner, and a gabled bay at the back of the side facade. Tall chimneys at each side of the house carry the eye upward due to the vertical reeding in the brickwork and the extra-tall height of the one at the right.

The interior features a central entrance space with a parlor and hearth to each side, a sharp winder stair behind the tower, a dining room, and a kitchen. Fairly modest oak woodwork has been painted over, but unusually tall interior doors and tiled fireplaces with original gas fixtures survive intact. Upstairs, the section below the main hipped roof is unfinished.

The brick porch is a replacement for an earlier and smaller porch with large turned columns. It was built by one of Kimmel's children who simply wanted a bigger porch. The front door is also replaced, and the brick veneer was recently repointed.

**History:** This impressive brick house, built for Lawrence Kimmel, Jr., was designed by the architectural team of Michael and Louis Beezer and is pictured in their 1893 catalogue. The house is still occupied by Kimmel's children and grandchildren. It is one of the few largely intact survivors of the Beezer's early urban Queen Anne style structures, and one of two Beezer houses within the survey area.

Tax books and the Beezer catalogue indicate that the house was built in 1893, although deed records show that Kimmel purchased this property, a full 50' x 120' lot, from John A. Wright's executors on January 11, 1894, for \$1,200. The house went up immediately, if it was not built before the final deed was drawn. In 1893, when the family lived at 1422 4th Ave., Kimmel (b. 1858) already had a successful grocery and general merchandise business at 1400 6th Ave. By 1896-97 Kimmel was resident at the current address; by 1904-05 he had a telephone installed both at his work address and his home.

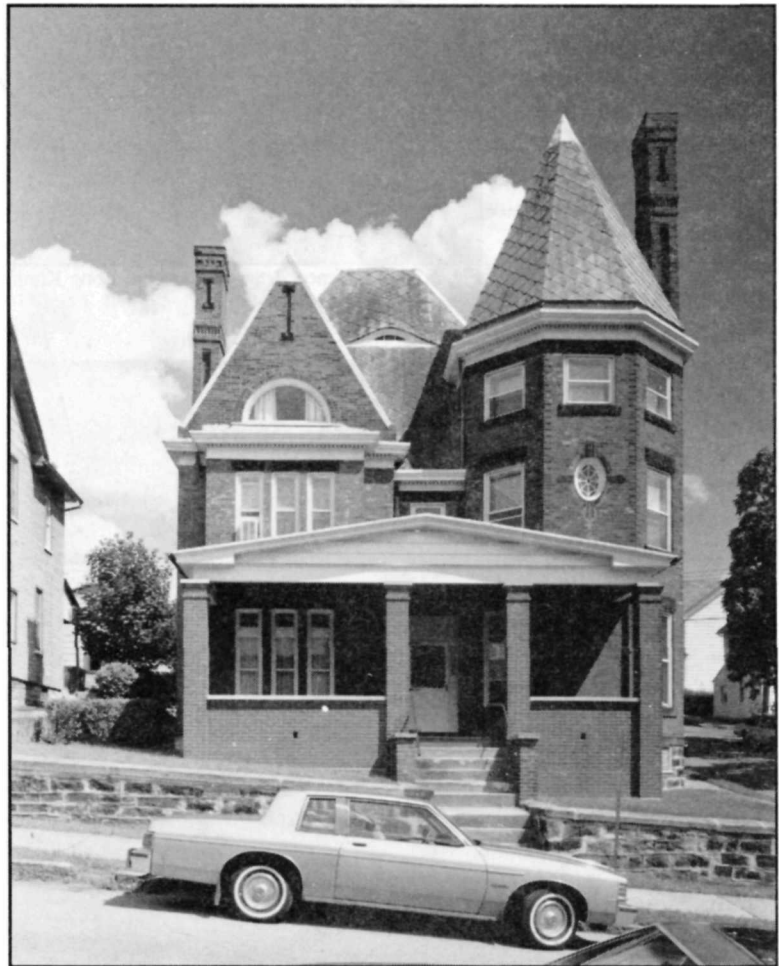


Fig. 5.25 Lawrence, Jr., and Caroline Long Kimmel House, 1331 2nd Ave.



Kimmel's fortunes soon changed, however. In 1906-07 his store was no longer mentioned in the directory. By 1912 he was working as a warehouseman for Fay, Hutchinson & Company, a wholesale grocer, and three of his children were employed at the Altoona Silk Mills. At various times Kimmel was a "laborer" or an employee of the silk mill with most of his children. Family members report that his business failed and that the children worked in part to help pay for and maintain this large and impressive house. Genevieve (Kimmel) Curry lived in this home with her husband James Curry, a boilermaker, and other family members.

Sources: Maps: 1882, 1894. Deed books: 99/372, 515/533. City directories. Tax assessment records. Interview with family members. 1893 Beezer catalogue.

Bertha and Joseph Zierer House  
1404 2nd Ave.

Built 1916

Description: This two-and-a-half-story house veneered in



Fig. 5.26 Lawrence, Jr., and Caroline Long Kimmel House, 1331 2nd Ave.



Fig. 5.27 Bertha and Joseph Zierer House, 1404 2nd Ave.



bright yellow brick has an overhanging hipped roof with hipped dormers on the front and sides. The house has a three-bay facade with a picture window in the first floor, and a porch of the same yellow brick with gable-front roof on a stone foundation. Minor alterations include the infill of glass brick to make front basement windows, and the addition of aluminum siding to the dormers.

Although rare, there are several yellow brick houses in the survey sample, and several also with square hipped roofs and multiple dormers--all contemporary with the Zierer House. Built in 1916, it is also in the style of many of the brick porches added to earlier homes and found throughout the neighborhood.

History: The Zierer House has changed hands only once since being built on the site of an earlier frame house also owned and occupied by the Zierer family. Tax records suggest a building date of 1916 for the current house.

Vincent Zierer purchased a half-lot on 2nd Avenue from John and Emma Wright on June 15, 1880. By 1896 he had built a house here and worked as a laborer; in 1900, however, he worked as secretary of the Germania Building and Loan Association No. 3. Vincent died before 1902 when his son, Joseph, purchased the property to help pay off debts of the estate. In 1916 his tax assessment rose from \$900 to \$1,800, reflecting the construction of this house at the front of the lot.

Joseph and Bertha Zierer lived at this address in 1930. Joseph worked as a molder; Ralph O. Zierer, a pipefitter, and Robert Zierer, a cleaner, also shared the residence. In 1939 Louis, a foreman, and Edna M. Neugebauer lived here, while none of the Zierers are listed. Joseph Zierer died in December 1951 and Bertha kept the property--now with only the brick house on it--living here until 1961, when it was sold to its present owner.

Sources: Maps: 1909, 1932. Deed books: 43/158, 132/653, 428/495-497, 790/490. City directories. Tax assessment records.

John Huber House  
1424 2nd Ave.

Built 1893

Description: A two-and-a-half-story house with side-gable roof hides behind a two-story, flat-roofed storefront addition. The storefront has a plain cornice and recessed door. Except for the use of vertical siding to enclose the first-floor display windows, the entire structure is covered with novelty siding.

History: John Huber, a machinist, purchased this lot



Fig. 5.28 John Huber House, 1424 2nd Ave.

from John Sponer and his wife, Magdalena, in 1889. The lot remained vacant until 1893 when the house was built. Huber is not listed at this address in the city directories until 1901. He was assessed \$900 that year for one half-lot and a house. The front addition was in place and being used as a store by 1909.

Huber lived at this address into the 1920s. Agnes and Adam Filer, Huber's heirs, purchased the property from the estate in 1946 for \$3,800. They operated Filer's Market in the front addition. Agnes, widowed by 1965, continued to live in the house until 1970.

Umberto Zangrilli, a roofer, and his wife, Mary, purchased the property for \$7,000 in 1971 from the Filer estate. The structure was converted back to a dwelling after 1968.

Sources: Maps: 1882, 1888, 1894, 1968. City directories. Tax assessment records. Deed books: 49/276, 74/473, 564/559, 924/607. ns.

James and Mary Scherdon House  
1426 2nd Ave.

Built 1883

Description: Two-and-a-half stories in height, this frame dwelling still retains its horizontal wood siding. There are two windows in each floor of the front facade and a single central window in the attic story; the front door is at the extreme right. Ornamental trim may have been removed over the years, but the plainness of the window surrounds suggests that it was always modest. Three small brackets fit below the returns of the fairly deep but otherwise plain cornice. A gable-front projecting porch, old but not original, covers only two-thirds of the house front and retains a coal chute into the basement at sidewalk level.

History: In contrast to houses that have remained in one or two families, a second pattern of ownership in the Fourth Ward area shows a steadily changing stream of owners and inhabitants over time. James Sheridan (Scherdon) was a resident of Altoona as early as 1873, working as a laborer and living on 3rd Avenue near 14th Street. Tax books show that he acquired an empty half-lot from John Wright in time for an 1882 assessment. A deed shows the purchase of the lot, for \$225, in January 1883. In either case, by 1883 Scherdon was assessed at \$200 for a half-lot and house on 2nd Avenue. Addresses have sometimes shifted in the Fourth Ward, and James Scherdon's home listed at "1424 2d Ave." in an 1886 directory is probably the current No. 1426. Scherdon was a laborer that year, but in 1891 had become constable of the Fourth Ward, living at the current address. M. J. Scherdon, working

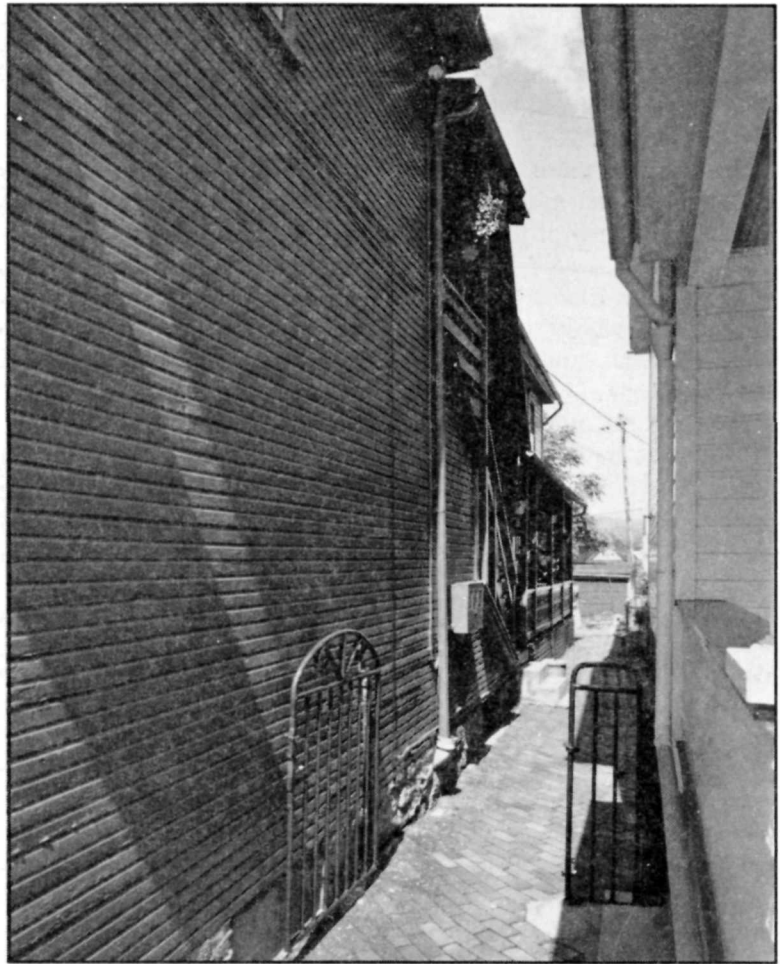


Fig. 5.29 Walkway between 1424 and 1422 2nd Ave.

in general merchandise, also lived here in 1892.

On July 6, 1892, James and his wife, Mary H. Scherdon, sold the property, now described as 24' x 120' and worth \$1,400, to Ignatius Kramer. The Scherdons moved down the block to 1428 2nd Ave. Ignatius and Mary Kramer are not listed in directories during the years of their ownership--they kept the property only two years, selling it on December 29, 1894, to John Koeck (Koeck) for \$1,100.



Fig. 5.30 James and Mary Scherdon House, 1426 2nd Ave.

John Koeck was a laborer when he lived here in 1898-99. He was a molder in 1914-15, when Caroline was also listed as a resident and John Jr. worked as a laborer. In 1925 Caroline was a widow living here with six children and/or relatives; of these, four women worked, three as stenographers and the fourth at the S. H. silk mill, while one male was employed in auto repairs.

In 1936, a sheriff's sale transferred ownership from the estate of John's widow Caroline Koeck to Carolyn Flynn, a Koeck heir, and her husband Dennis C. Flynn. When Dennis and Carolyn M. Flynn lived here in 1939, Dennis was a constable like James Scherdon before him. In another sheriff's sale in December 1941, the Flynn's passed the title to the Phoenix Building and Loan Association. In 1945, George B. and Edna F. Kyle acquired the property for \$3,000. They lived here in 1945 when George worked as a machinist for the PRR. George B. Kyle died in September 1961, and Edna sold the property to its current owners ten years later.

Sources: Maps: 1882, 1894. Deed books: 49/651, 92/666, 105/66, 432/134, 465/320, 508/291, 923/45.

#### John and Emma Wright House II 1506 2nd Ave.

Built 1884

Description: While it is one of many three-bay side-gable houses in the Fourth Ward, the Wright House is unusual because of the location of its main entrance in the side-gable end within a small entry porch. The front facade sports two rows of three identical windows. These are evenly spaced but placed a bit left of center. Of frame construction with original horizontal novelty wood siding, the house is also notable for its ornamental window surrounds and cornice. The cornice with its familiar set

of four pairs of brackets (and brackets below the side returns) also bears curved incised decorations that play off the window surrounds. These have upward-flaring pediments topped by a central diamond visually joined to projecting lower sills by verticals that flair outward at both lower and upper edges. There is a central brick chimney rising from the roof ridge.

History: This house is of historical interest for several reasons. Unlike most Fourth Ward

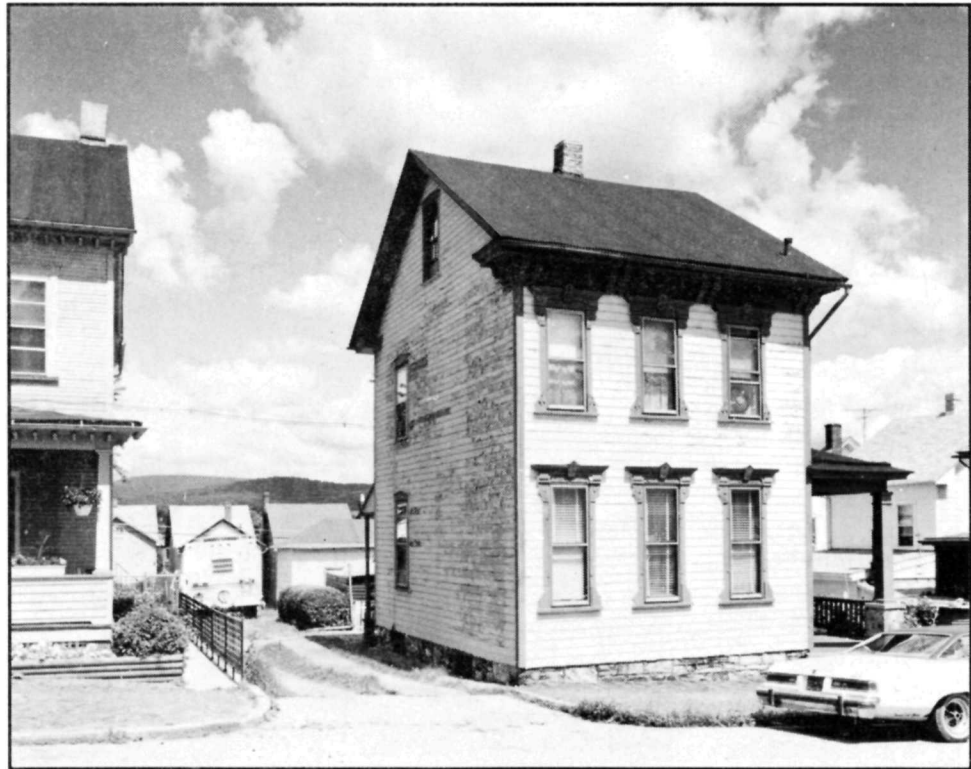


Fig. 5.31 John and Emma Wright House II, 1506 2nd Ave.



Fig. 5.32 John and Emma Wright House II, 1506 2nd Ave.

houses, it sits on a lot originally laid out to face a street rather than an avenue. It is also one of four that were built while on land still owned by John Wright (see also 205 15th St.\*). Finally, the house has been moved. It originally occupied the corner lot facing 15th Street and was moved to its current location by Max Kettl in 1916 when he built a more substantial brick-veneered house at the corner.

The four houses on 15th Street owned by John Wright first



appeared in his tax assessment for 1884. The 1888 tax book showed Anthony Graupensberger with a half-lot and house worth \$300 at 2nd Avenue and 15th Street, transferred from Wright. The deed is also dated this year--Graupensberger paid \$1,400 for a 30' x 100' lot--and this large sum confirms that a building was already present. Graupensberger, a watchman, used the house as a rental property. His heirs sold the property to Maximilien A. Kettl in August 1909 for \$2,200; at that time the lot contained a two-story frame dwelling.

Max A. Kettl was a shop hand when he lived at 201 15th St. in 1912-13 with Thomas S., a foreman. In 1916 Kettl was assessed as a gang leader at the shops and owner of two houses on this lot. The new house was valued at \$1,800, the "house moved in rear of lot"--the Wright House--at \$800. In 1930 Max's widow, Elizabeth C. Kettl, lived at 201 15th St., with son Regis P., a printer. Ownership was vested in Regis in 1932, although Elizabeth still occupied the brick house in 1939.

Sources: Maps: 1882, 1894, 1932. Deed books: 70/188, 204/412, 411/23. City directories. Tax assessment records. Interview with neighbors.

Frank L. and Ella Williams House  
1515 2nd Ave.

Built 1915 or 1916

Description: The Williams House is one of six matching gambrel-front houses placed along the east side of 2nd Avenue (Fig. 2.14). With its minimal ornament and substantial proportions, it represents one of the last significant house types to appear in the survey area. In keeping with the history of infill patterns, frame gambrel-front houses of this type appear mostly on 1st and 2nd avenues, at the outer bounds of the area.



Fig. 5.33 Frank L. and Ella Williams House, 1515 2nd Ave.

This asphalt-sided dwelling is two rather than two-and-a-half stories tall. Visual ornament comes mostly from formal features: the slight cornice return at the base of the gable, the irregular piercing pattern of the three windows in the second-floor front facade, and the picture window and sidelights at the front door below. The window surrounds are rather wide and flat with a cap of stepped molding above a row of beaded trim. The contrast of light paint against dark siding has been used to highlight exterior woodwork and the porch foundation. A brick chimney rises from the center back of the roof ridge.



All six houses in this row have been altered, this one least substantially on the exterior. The asphalt siding is a later addition, as are the metal porch supports and possibly the porch foundation as well. A two-tone porch awning changes visual proportion and de-emphasizes the picture window and front entrance. The small window in the attic has, however, been retained.

History: The six matching houses on 2nd Avenue (Nos. 1513-1523) are one of two larger groups of contractor-developed houses found in the survey area. They were built by the contracting firm Hoyer & Kring. Collectively, they make up one of the newest areas of housing within the Fourth Ward survey--much of the land facing 2nd Avenue in this block was owned by John Wright's heirs as late as 1912, when it was sold in November of that year to S. M. Hoyer and M. L. Kring.

In the property tax records of 1913, Hoyer & Kring are assessed for "about 2 acres Vacant hills & stone 1515 to 35 2 ave." for \$2,000, with the note "from John Wright est." The 1912 assessments reveal that except for two other vacant half-lots, this is the last remaining section of the original Wright estate. As listed in the Altoona directory for 1912-13, Samuel M. Hoyer and Mal L. Kring had offices at 1624 8th Ave., just outside the Fourth Ward boundaries. They listed themselves as "contractors, stone and cement." Hoyer was also the president and Kring the director of the Cambria Clay Manufacturing Company, located in Wilmore, Pa., with an office at this same 8th Avenue address.

In a 1915 deed, M. L. and Hortense Kring sold this single half-lot, 25' x 120', to Frank L. Williams for \$2,700. Directories show him living here by 1917.

A 1931 sheriff's sale transferred the property to the Workingman's Building and Loan Association which rented it to Matthew Riley. Carmel M. and Joseph Daversa purchased the property in August 1944 for \$2,800, and they took up residence soon after. Joseph worked as a welder for the PRR.

Sources: Maps: 1909, 1932. Deed books: 121/616-619, 221/512, 229/452, 405/187, 490/139. City directories. Tax assessment records.

Elizabeth and Blair  
Ward House  
1537 2nd Ave.

Built ca. 1925-27

Description: The Ward House makes an impressive appearance among its neighbors due to its unusual proportions and the solid feel of its multi-toned brick veneer. Many houses originally built on full 50' lots used the extra property for surrounding yard space. The Ward



Fig. 5.34 Elizabeth and Blair Ward House, 1537 2nd Ave.

House, however, incorporates most of the width of its full-sized lot. If not for the lack of a surrounding yard, it would look more at home in the Llyswn survey area.

Stylistically the house is also atypical of the Fourth Ward in its gestures toward the Colonial Revival and 1920s bungalow styles.<sup>37</sup> Only a handful of houses in the Fourth Ward survey area have central doorways and perfectly symmetrical facades (see 1214 3rd Ave.\*). Symmetry is emphasized by the hipped roof with its wide front-facing dormer projecting beyond the rise of the exterior walls, the wide spacing of the three bays, the doubling of windows at each side of the front facade, and the projecting gabled roof of the massive brick front porch. The enclosed sun porch on the right side of the house emphasizes rather than disrupts the pattern, as it is lower and smaller in outline than the main structure. A tall chimney runs up the side wall from the sun porch and through the projecting edge of the roof.

History: Like 1515 2nd Ave.\*, this house was built on property acquired from John Wright's heirs by S. M. Hoyer and M. L. Kring in November 1912. With their wives Clara A. Hoyer and Hortense Kring, they sold a 48' x 120' lot to Elizabeth Ward, wife of Blair Ward, for \$2,000 in September 1913. Although this value is high, there does not appear to have been a house on the property. Elizabeth Ward, a nonresident, was taxed for a vacant lot the following year. By 1916 a double house was built on the rear third of the property.

The exact building date of this house is somewhat muddled in available records. Tax books indicate a brick garage at the site in 1925, but the city directory listed Blair Ward as a fireman for the city at this address. Elizabeth Ward's 1927 tax assessment entry--"new brick/ garage" is unclear, but the associated high value of \$5,000 suggests the presence of the current house. It is the 1929 tax assessment which first mentions a "large brick house," while the property is valued at \$4,500. By 1930 Elizabeth Ward was listed as resident here as well, working as a clerk for Grace Wissinger.

In 1934 joint title to the property was vested in Elizabeth Ward and Howard German; present at that time were a brick-cased dwelling and a brick, two-car garage. Ward and German, a machinist, seem to have married. They passed on the property John H. and Mildred Megehan in September 1949. In the 1950s, the Megehans resided at 714 Bell Ave. and rented this property to Philip and Mary Scaglione. Scaglione worked first as a helper at Lafferty Trucking Company, then ran a used-fur business on 17th Street. The house was sold to its present owners in 1973.

Sources: Maps: 1909, 1932. Deed books: 121/619, 206/666, 221/26, 425/673-675, 611/341, 949/191. City directories. Tax assessment records.

### John H. Westley House 1200 3rd Ave.

Built 1881

Description: The location of the Westley House on a corner lot allows for the use of ornamental detail on both front and side facades. This wood-sided frame house is in many ways the prototype of the two-and-a-half-story, three-bay, side-gable house found so consistently throughout the Fourth Ward survey area. There is an enclosed off-center chimney rising from the roof ridge, and an entrance door at one side of the front facade. The addition of the projecting two-story bay window on the side of the house, however, is an unusual feature. A flat-roofed, two-story, rear addition is unornamented but of the same fabric.

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<sup>37</sup> Only one bungalow, at 1201 6th Ave., was found in the survey area.

Although the porch has been replaced, the remaining exterior woodwork appears to be original, intact, and complete. The ridges of horizontal novelty-wood siding provide contrast for the smooth surface of the roof cornice and the curved lines of the cornice brackets and pedimented window surrounds. In a typical pattern, four sets of double cornice brackets, ornamented with molded and incised decoration, are evenly spaced across the front of the house. A set of brackets at each side turns the corner, supporting the return of the cornice at the foot of the side gable. Shaped wood window surrounds make use of projecting and incised decoration, having flat inward-curving verticals that are capped with a stylized flat-topped pediment featuring pilaster-like pendants and a superimposed central keystone. These appear on the front and side facade; a picture-window version is used in the first floor front. The same window surrounds are used

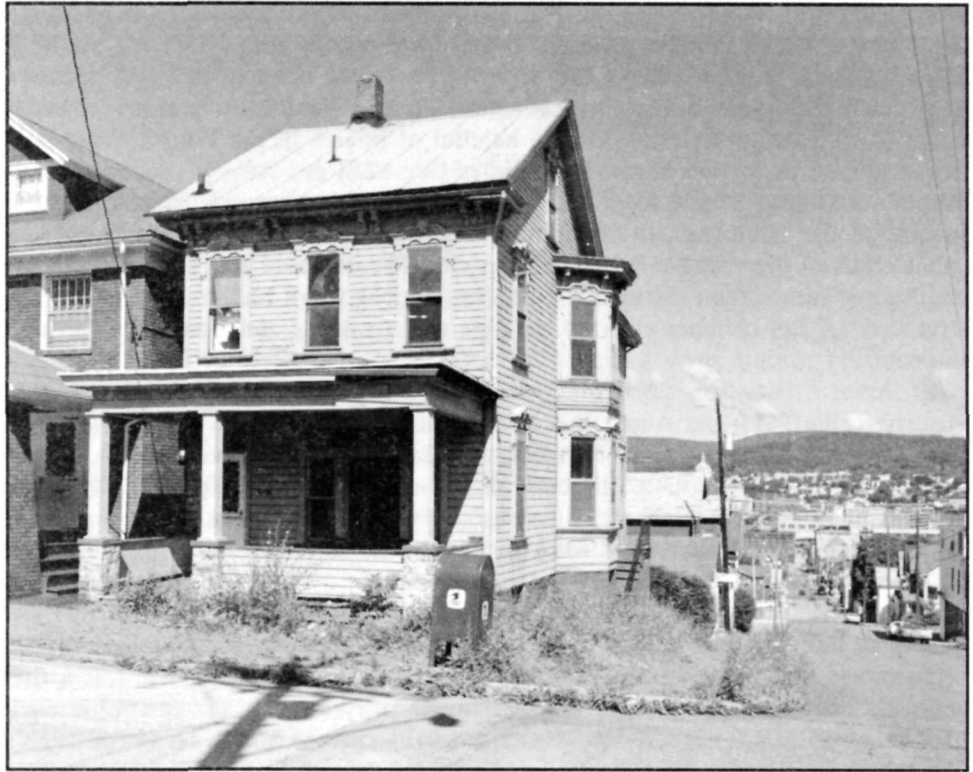


Fig. 5.35 John H. Westley House, 1200 3rd Ave. and view to Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament on Altoona's west side.



Fig. 5.36 John H. Westley House, 12th Street facade.

on the bay window, whose flat top has a cornice with single brackets at the sides of each face.

History: This corner house is built on part of the property originally purchased by C. B. Bowles of Tyrone, Pa., from John and Emma Wright for \$600 in February 1874. J. H. Westley bought the 50' x 120' lot from C. B. and Mary Bowles in April 1880 for \$750. John H. Westley, a carpenter, was assessed in 1881 for one lot and house, 3rd Avenue and 12th Street, valued at \$500. In 1900 Westley still lived here; his occupation was given as shop hand. In 1906, Westley worked as a machinist for the PRR and Lizzie Kerlin, single, boarded at this address. By 1912, she was the head of household, living here with Harry J. Kerlin.

The property was willed to Lizzie M. Kerlin who divided the property. In April 1922 she transferred 1200 3rd Ave. to Harry J. Kerlin, 1202 3rd Ave. and a rear parcel of 1200 3rd Ave. to Cloyd W. and Pauline Kerlin. In 1925 Harry and his wife, Crissie A., were residents of the house. Harry was a salesman of rugs and "Lyfe Tyme Furnytur." Twenty years later the family business had become "Kerlin Furniture Warehouse." Cloyd and Pauline transferred the rear portion of the corner lot containing a garage to Harry and Crissie in 1925. The 1932 Sanborn map shows the garage as also functioning as a store. They sold their house and the garage to James R. Duncan in April 1946.

Dennis G. and Edna R. Duncan acquired the property the following year. Dennis and James R., both barbers, remodelled the multi-functional garage building, 309 12th St., as a barber shop.

The property, specifically including 309 12th St., was sold to Joseph and Patricia Dorfmeister in April 1974 for \$5,000. The current owner bought the house in 1987; it is presently vacant.

Sources: Maps: 1882, 1888. Deed books: 35/233, 44/503, 295/512, 403/237, 403/609, 342/560, 296/122, 295/512, 533/228, 556/491, 960/178. City directories. Tax assessment records.



Fig. 5.37 John and Ellie Bush House, 1214 3rd Ave.

John and Ellie Bush House

1214 3rd Ave.

Built between 1876-80

Description: Only three houses in the Fourth Ward survey area qualify as an I-house--a vernacular house form having two identical rooms separated by a central hallway. Although common in several areas of Pennsylvania and elsewhere, their scarcity in Altoona is not surprising. The I-houses's broad width is not well suited to urban



house lots. The existence of this early Altoona example is, in fact, surprising in itself.

The Bush house is a two-and-one-half-story, side-gable, frame dwelling. It is one room deep and has three bays with a central entrance and an enclosed side chimney. Original horizontal wood siding survives. The cornice is decorated with paired brackets on both faces of the front corners of the building. Original ornamental window surrounds on the second floor have projecting flat-topped pediments with incised decoration. In the first floor are two extra-wide picture windows, each with a row of individual squared lights above. There are no windows in the side walls of the house.

A later porch, covering the left two-thirds of the front, has square columns supporting a front-gable roof. There is a second entrance in the asphalt-covered rear addition projecting beyond the house on the north side. The southern exterior wall is sided in asphalt as well.

History: John Bush, a brakeman, built and owned a house here in 1871, although the deed was not recorded until 1887. The present house, however, was probably not built until 1880. From 1877 to 1879 Bush was assessed only for "property" valued at \$250. By 1880 a house was listed and the assessment raised to \$325.

John Bush soon became a freight conductor, and the earliest city directories listed his address as 3rd Avenue above 12th Street. By 1886, the address of No. 1214 has been assigned to Bush. In 1917, Bush's widow Ella continued to live here.

After an initial fifty years in one family, the house saw a succession of owners. Ellie Bush and her children sold the property to Milton Papadeas on April 24, 1924, for \$3,800. Milton and Pota Papadeas resided here by 1925; Milton, along with Henry Papadeas ran Papadeas Brothers, a confectionery, at 1200 7th Ave. Through sheriff's sales the house passed via State Capital Savings and Loan to Charles R. and Mildred Ketrow in 1932. In 1939 the Ketrows resided here while Charles worked as a truck driver; John Sabatino lived in the rear of the house.

George B. Metzger, who became owner in 1943, worked as a blacksmith for the PRR and lived here with his wife Verna M. Frank P. and Catherine Schreiner acquired the property in 1955 for \$4,800. It was passed on to Edwin and Rita Howard in August 1976; they sold it to the current owner ten years later. The Schreiners and Howards both lived here during their respective ownerships.

Sources: Maps: 1882, 1888. Deed books: 31/569, 32/263, 49/140, 322/89, 406/579, 404/45, 484/25, 502/88, 714/41, 985/851, 1123/402. City directories. Tax assessment records.

#### Thomas M. and Catherine Lyman House 1300 3rd Ave.

Built 1887-90

Description: This example of a three-bay, cross-gable type house is clad in brick veneer rather than the more common wood siding. Sanborn insurance maps suggest that the brick veneer was added between 1888 and 1894 to a newly built frame structure; an entry for "improvements" and a greatly increased tax assessment for the year 1890 suggest that the house took its final form over the course of several years. By 1891 it was described as brick.

Ornament is less extravagant on this brick example, particularly because of the relative plainness of window surrounds--a modest arch at top is picked out in a row of vertical bricks while a projecting molded sill rests below. A bracketed wood cornice beneath the front eaves has cut-in arches which complement the window surrounds and a band of cutwork applique. A two-story hexagonal bay window



on the side of this corner house has a matching cornice which extends into the ell addition at the rear of the house.

The entrance door is at the left of the front facade; next to it is a wide picture window. There is an enclosed chimney to the right of center. The current simple porch is a later addition. Gable returns have been boxed in on the front and sides of the roof line.

**History:** Like many other Fourth Ward properties, the corner lot at 1300 3rd Ave. changed hands several times before any structure was built. Alexander Smith purchased six lots in this block of the city from the Wrights between 1865 and 1871. He, with his wife Louise, sold all six to Francis McCullough for \$2,000 in June 1871.

Thomas M. Lyman, a blacksmith, purchased a single 50' x 120' lot from McCullough in March 1887. The house was built by 1888 as Lyman's tax entry for that year shows "vacant" crossed out and "House" written in; assessment value jumped from \$75 to \$375. Lyman's \$200 worth of taxable improvements in 1890 were possibly the addition of the current brick veneer, although the overall increase in assessment to \$1,400 suggests many improvements since the original construction date.

Thomas M. and Catherine Lyman sold the house and corner 25' x 120' lot to James P. and Regina Hazlett later that year, on August 12, 1890. In 1891, directories show Porter J. Hazlett (probably James P.), a watchman, living here along with William T. Hazlett, a carpenter for the PRR. By 1896, Regina Hazlett, a recent widow, is listed, along with Elizabeth and Margaret, both teachers.

James P. Hazlett's wife and daughters, as heirs, sold the house with the front 25' x 70' section of the lot to John H. Brown for \$3,000 in 1909. J. Howard Brown worked as a clerk and was listed as resident at this address by 1912. Brown sold the house to Walter L. and Cora L. King for \$4,800 in June 1924; Walter worked as a machinist when they lived here in 1925. The property has been sold several times since then: to John C. Waite in February 1929; back to John H. Brown in August 1931; to Sherman H., a plumber, and Catherine M. Foor in April 1944.

**Sources:** Maps: 1882, 1888, 1894. Deed books: 26/213, 62/686, 82/124, 188/82, 321/680, 380/71, 400/531, 491/99. City directories. Tax assessment records.

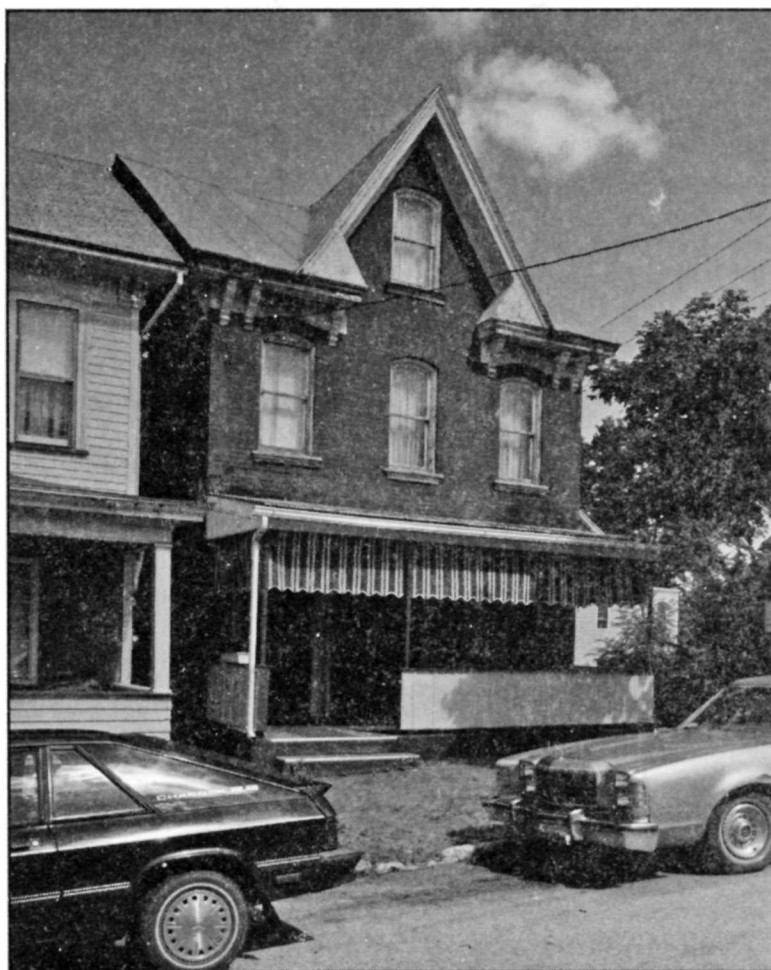


Fig. 5.38 Thomas M. and Catherine Lyman house, 1300 3rd Ave.



Fig. 5.39 E. C. Howarth house, 1308 3rd Ave. (center).

E. C. Howarth House  
1308 3rd Ave.

Built between 1883-85

Description: This two-and-a-half-story, three-bay, frame dwelling has a side-gable roof with a central chimney. It retains original decorative window surrounds and bracketed cornice. Novelty wood siding covers the structure. The only alteration to this house appears to be the addition of a picture window while the adjacent houses have all received more dramatic alterations

over time. These changes range from built-in brick porches to a variety of dormer styles.

History: E. C. Howarth purchased half of a lot from Francis McCullough in 1883 and constructed this house on it by 1885. Howarth moved to the Second Ward in 1888 but retained this property until 1891 when he sold it to Albert Stump.

A laborer, Stump was assessed \$1,200 for his new house. By 1901, he had become a machinist and by 1919, he was apparently operating a hardware shop out of his home. Samuel and Grace Caraher bought the house from Stump in June of that year. Samuel, a clerk, purchased the house for \$3,750.

Paul Parker and his wife moved into the house in 1947 after buying the property from Grace Caraher's heirs for \$2,850. Parker was a boiler maker for the Pennsylvania Railroad.

Sources: Maps: 1882, 1888. City directories. Tax assessment records. Deed books: 85/140, 265/492, 435/419, 512/303. ns.

Theophilus Schraff House  
1327 3rd Ave.

Built 1872

Description: One of the earlier gambrel-front houses in the Fourth Ward survey area, the three-story, two-bay, Schraff House is tall and narrow, very different in proportion from later gambrel-front examples (see 1515 1st Ave. for comparison).

This frame dwelling is now sided in asphalt and surviving woodwork is fairly plain. A projecting cornice molding outlines the sides of the gambrel front, ending in deep returns at the base of the roof slope. A doubled central window in the third floor and single windows and front door below have molded surrounds. More ornamental is the original flat-roofed porch in the carpenter Gothic style. A spindled and tracery frieze joins with ornamental brackets to three turned balusters. Balusters below the rail have been replaced with horizontal siding.

History: Like 1214 3rd Ave.\*, this house was built long before any official sale of land occurred. Although Theophilus Schraff did not purchase this unusually narrow 20' x 120' lot from John and Emma Wright until February 1883, assessment records show that "Philip Shuff" is first taxed for one lot and house as early as 1872. By 1896, Schraff was working as a janitor for the PRR; Francis Schraff, a tailor, and Frank Schraff, a laborer, also lived here. By 1900 he had a lot and house at 1327 3rd Ave., a second at 1220 2nd Ave. and a vacant lot at 1326 2nd Ave.

After its initial ownership, the Schraff House became, like many Fourth Ward structures, a rental property. It was purchased by Lawrence G. and Bertha E. Tompkins in June 1919, but they kept it only nine months, selling it in turn to Anna T. Schimminger. She is not listed in the 1925 Altoona directory; in 1939 the house was occupied by renters John B. and Mary C. Steindel.

When Albert and Mary V. Zangrilli purchased the house for \$2,500 in October 1966, they likewise did not take up residence. The 1968 directory shows Charles F. Katen, a blaster for Lithcote, and his wife, Alice M., living here. The property continued to change hands--in November 1981 it was acquired by Ronald E. and Deborah Biddle who sold it to the present owner in 1987.

Sources: Maps: 1882, 1888. Deed books: 53/114, 265/226, 275/186, 854/340, 1161/811, 1145/227. City directories. Tax assessment records.

Ludwig and Frances Leix House I  
1329 3rd Ave.

Built by 1876-77

Description: This three-bay, side-gable, brick-veneered dwelling is of a type common to Fourth Ward, but larger and more substantial than its frame counterparts. Two-and-a-half stories in height, the Leix House has its entrance door at right front and an enclosed central chimney. Window surrounds are



Fig. 5.40 Theophilus Schraff House, 1327 3rd Ave.

fairly plain, but an ornamented wood cornice includes carved pedimented caps for the second-floor windows as well as the four standard sets of paired scroll brackets across the front facade. First-floor windows are extra tall with matching inset wood pediments.

Like its neighbor the Schraff House, the Leix House retains its original flat-roofed porch. Sections of spindled frieze end in tracery squares where they join with brackets to four supporting turned balusters. A row of fine sawtooth applique runs beneath the overhanging molded roof edge. Below the porch railing is vertical wood siding. Entrance to the porch is from the right side.

History: Houses that have stayed in one or two families tend to survive more completely intact. Ludwig Leix purchased this property on the corner of 3rd Avenue and 14th Street, a full 50' x 120' lot, from John and Emma Wright on May 27, 1876, for \$600. Ludwig first appeared in tax records in 1877 when he was age 30, married, and a property owner. He earned a living as a blacksmith. His son Louis was listed as a drug clerk living with the family in 1893.

By 1903 the family was prosperous enough to build a double house as a rental property facing 14th Street (210-12 14th St.\*) at the rear of the lot. The 1329 3rd Ave. house continued to be the family home.

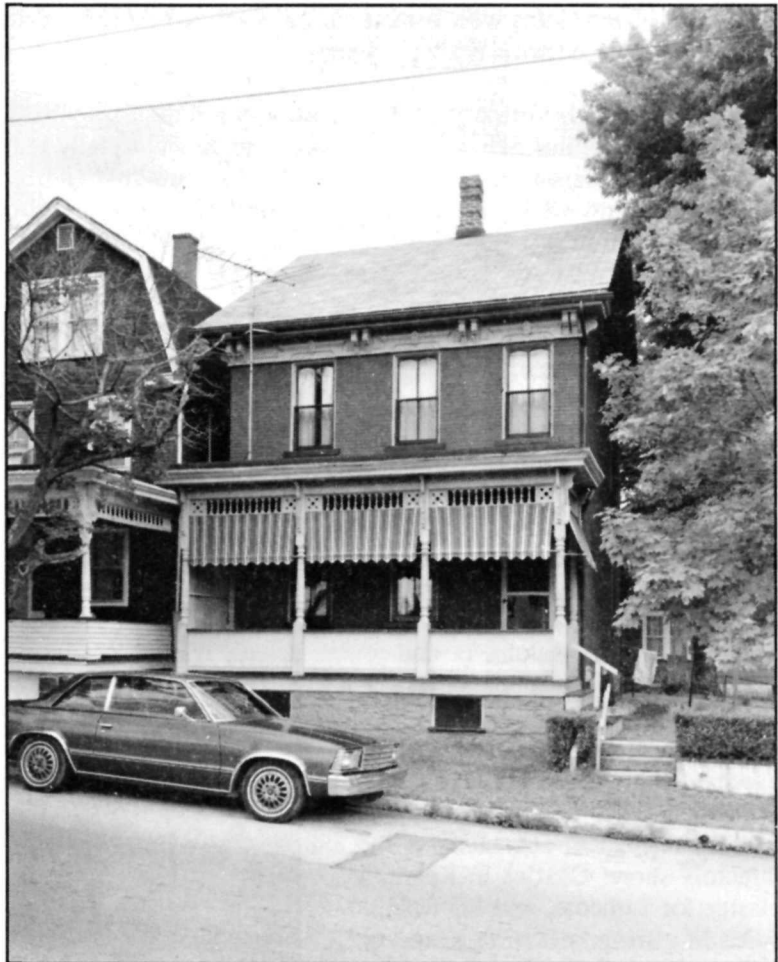


Fig. 5.41 Ludwig and Frances Leix House I, 1329 3rd Ave.

In 1900, Frances Leix was listed as resident with Annie Leix who worked as a dressmaker out of the family home. Ludwig Leix died on July 11, 1911, leaving the property to Frances.

When she died in 1928, the property became vested in the five Leix children; who moved out of the house and rented it. By 1939, John and Louise P. Hindinger were the tenants; they purchased the house in 1946. By 1948-49 John Hindinger worked as a derrick operator for the PRR.

Sources: Maps: 1882, 1888. Deed books: 35/192, 543/533. City directories. Tax assessment records.





Fig. 5.42 Timothy and Mary C. Healy House, 1415 3rd Ave.

Timothy and Mary C. Healy House  
1415 3rd Ave.

Built 1895-96

Description: The Healy House, a good example of a centered cross-gable type found throughout Altoona (see 1220 6th. Ave.\* and First Ward examples), and one of three to sit side-by-side on this block of 3rd Avenue, survives in remarkably original condition both inside and out.

The two-and-a-half-story, three-bay, frame dwelling has a central chimney stack and is still covered with its original horizontal wood siding. A single window is centered in the front cross-gable, but the three windows of the second floor are offset toward the right side of the front facade. In the first floor the entrance door opens at right and is paired with a wide picture window having a leaded-glass transom.

The interrupted front cornice extends with slight returns into both front and side gables. Decorative cornice brackets are not consistently paired: three small scroll brackets are spaced

below the eave on the front facade, while one pair of brackets rests below the side-facade return. A row of sawtooth cutwork along the cornice line is echoed in the decorative window surrounds that have flat-topped projecting crests and bases, and along the eave of the flat porch roof. Most ornamental is the cutwork porch, having four turned balusters supporting sections of a spindled and tracery frieze. Scrolled brackets with incised decoration and beaded edging join the balusters to the bottom of the projecting eave. A row of square vertical spindles supports the porch rail.

History: The lot at 1415 3rd Ave. was vacant when Timothy Healy, a hostler, purchased it from John Wright's heirs in August 1895. In 1893, Timothy was still living next door at 1417 3rd Ave., in the home of engineer Patrick Healy. By 1896, however, he resided at No. 1415; tax records for that year show the "vacant" entry crossed out and a house written in along with a large increase in assessment value.

Healy was at first a hostler but later worked as a mason; he was married by August 1905. In 1925 Timothy Healy worked as a clerk and resided here along with a large family: his wife, Mary C.; Elizabeth B., who worked as a clerk at the PRR system freight office; Helen B., who worked a cashier at the Shoe Tree; Mary R., who taught at the newly opened Roosevelt Junior High; and William G., listed without occupation. By 1930 Cecelia and Timothy T., Jr., both students; William G., a dentist; and Helen, a stenographer, join the list.



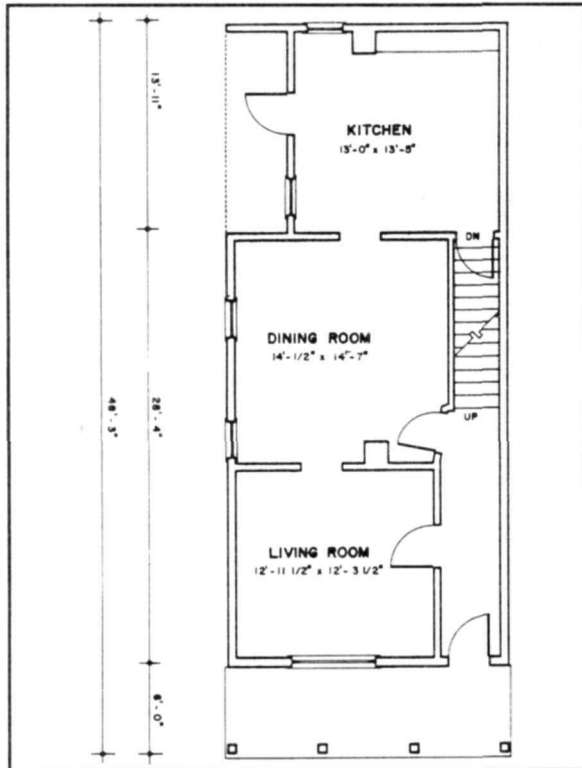


Fig. 5.43 Timothy and Mary C. Healy House, 1415 3rd Ave., first-floor plan. Drawn by Anette A. Jensen.

Timothy Healy died in 1932 and in November 1938 Mary C. Healy passed the title to the property to her three daughters, Mary R., Helen C., and Cecelia K. In 1939, directories show Mary C. as the head of household, living here with Cecelia, now a teacher at Prospect School; Mary, still a teacher at Roosevelt; and Helen, a bookkeeper at the Olympic Theater. Cecelia Healy married and passed on her share of the title in October 1945. In 1955, Helen and Mary continued to live here with their mother. By 1970, Helen and Mary, now retired, lived here alone. Mary Healy died in November 1976; in 1986 Helen Healy sold the property to its present owner for \$8,500.

Sources: Maps: 1894, 1909. Deed books: 106/630, 159/642,644 444/241, 519/116, 1126/604. City directories. Tax assessment books.

Charles D. Mason House  
1201 4th Ave.

Built 1888 or 1889

Description: This two-and-a-half-story frame dwelling has a clipped side-gable roof. There is a double-

gable dormer in front with fishscale shingles. A two-story bay on the street side of the house also has a side-gable roof. The first story of the bay is canted while the second story is square. With its wood stick-work combination and windows with colored lights, this house not only outshines its closest neighbors, it is one of a very few with this type of decoration.

History: James Rodgers, a machinist, was living in a small frame house on this site in 1870, but Charles D. Mason



Fig. 5.44 Timothy and Mary C. Healy House, 1415 3rd Ave., detail of porch.

had the present house built in 1888 or 1889. The assessed value of the new house was \$2,100 in 1890.

William Westbrook, who operated an ice cream store on 8th Avenue, purchased this house for \$1,625 in 1891. In 1901, Samuel Shields, a railroader, and A. Westrak, a clerk, were boarding at the Westbrook residence. William's widow and son still occupied the house in 1919.

Harry G. Anderson, an inspector, purchased the property from William Westbrook's heirs in 1923. Harry's widow, Florence, turned the house over to McVey's, Inc., for \$3,500 in 1945. McVey's were realtors, property managers, and lessors of chain stores. They sold the property in 1946 to John and Marie Walters for \$4,200. John worked for the Pennsylvania Railroad as a laborer.

The house was sold in 1961 to Paul Franco, a brakeman for the railroad, who rented the house out. Ralph W. Arthur, Jr.,



Fig. 5.45 Charles D. Mason House, 1201 4th Ave. and 1203 4th Ave.



Fig. 5.46 Charles D. Mason House, 1201 4th Ave., 12th St. facade.

manager of Royal Tile, bought the house in 1969 also as a rental unit. Since 1971, 1201 4th Ave. has been owned by James G. Teeter, et al.

Sources: Maps: 1888, 1894. City directories. Tax assessment records. Deed books: W/135, 62/176, 82/644, 83/70, 305/618, 527/72-74, 784/135, 896/42, 923/188. ns.

Cloyd Kerlin House  
1213 4th Ave.

Built 1890

Description: This two-and-one-half-story, brick-veneered, frame house has an asymmetrically placed cross gable fronted by a two-story, canted bay which carries the line of the cornice decoration. There is a circular window with decorative brickwork in the gable above the bay. An oriel with scrollwork protrudes from the second floor on the northwest side. A projecting one-story entry porch on original foundation joins the side of the bay.

History: Two brothers, James and Cloyd Kerlin, erected what may have been identical houses on this lot in 1890. Each of the houses had an assessed value of \$1,500 that year. Cloyd Kerlin continued to own 1213 4th Ave. until 1935 when it was sold at sheriff's sale to the Altoona Trust Co.

Daniel and Frances Richardella purchased the house from Altoona Trust in 1946 for \$2,800. They in turn sold it to Charles Weyant, Jr., in 1969 for \$3,500.

Sources: Maps: 1888. City directories. Tax assessment records. Deed books: 30/244, 30/246, 51/407, 59/338, 296/448, 422/339, 547/447, 884/240. ns.

Joseph and Barbara Fleig House  
1329 4th Ave.

Built 1872

Moved between 1888-94

Description: The Fleig House is an early Fourth Ward example of the use of brick veneer on a wood



Fig. 5.47 Cloyd Kerlin House, 1213 4th Ave.

frame. The two-and-a-half-story, gable-front dwelling has a later enclosed one-story porch that obscures its original front entrance. The main entrance is now in the 14th Street side, where a small frame porch was added. Trim is modest, consisting of cornice returns on the front gable end and pedimented stone lintels and flat stone sills for the windows. Pointed-arch windows enter the attic space at front and back.

History: The Fleig House, like a sizeable minority of others in the Fourth

Ward survey area, remains in its original family, having passed through two generations of daughters. According to family history, the house was moved from the corner to its current location, 25' from 14th Street. This is confirmed by maps that in 1882 and 1888 show a brick dwelling on the corner lot, and in 1894 show that lot vacant and the current location occupied by a brick-veneered house of these proportions. In city directories, however, the address of the house does not change from 1331 to 1329 until 1925.

A full 50' x 120' lot was first purchased by Gottleib and Joseph Fleig from John and Emma Wright in May 1871. The property seems to have been intended only for Joseph, however, as he alone was taxed the following year for a house and lot, valued at \$250. By 1874 the value of the property, at 4th Avenue and 14th Street, had increased to \$525. According to 1885 tax records, Joseph, a laborer, owned the house and lot and five cows.

Gottleib Fleig sold his interest in the property to Joseph in May 1891. In April 1920, Joseph and Barbara Fleig passed the property to their son-in-law and daughter Roy A. and Minnie A. Raichle. When the Raichles lived here in 1925, Roy worked as a pressman for the Mirror Printing Company. Roy Raichle died in June 1941. Minnie Raichle transferred the title to her daughter and son-in-law, Lois M. and Daniel G. Shultz, in 1967. In 1970, the Schultzes lived here, while Daniel worked at the meat counter of K-Mart Foods.

Sources: Maps: 1882, 1888, 1894. Deed books: 86/171, 85/634, 277/564, 858/53. City directories. Tax assessment records. Interview with family members.



Fig. 5.48 Joseph and Barbara Fleig House, 1329 4th Ave.



Union Brewery Stable

1425-1/2 4th Ave.

Built by 1894

Description: Although situated at the alley in the middle of the block, this two-and-a-half-story, brick-veneered stable is the only surviving building on the property and is clearly visible from the street. The entrance is oriented toward the lot and the avenue where the rest of the brewery complex was once located, rather than to the alley throughway.

A front-facing cross gable and a ventilation tower above are centered within the original facade--these are now off-set as the building has been extended at left. The current entrance bay shows signs of reworking in the brick. Running the middle third of the front facade, it has a wide inset wooden lintel with a sectioned, glazed, and panelled door below. Domestic-scale windows provide light and air on two levels.



Fig. 5.49 Union Brewery Stable, 1425-1/2 4th Ave.

History: In keeping with the Fourth Ward's German

character, most of Altoona's breweries were originally located within or near its boundaries. The brewery at 4th Avenue and 15th Street may have been one of the first in the city.<sup>38</sup> The only extant building on the site was built as a stable during the brewery's heyday.

The 1873 city directory lists "Fisher and Haid, brewers," on 4th Avenue near 15th Street. In June of that year Charles Haid and Michael Fisher purchased lot Nos. 5 and 6 from Joseph and Catherine Stehle for \$5,000. The high price indicates that the brewery was already in existence, yet the Stehles had only purchased the lots from John and Emma Wright in March 1873; apparently the transaction represented only the final installment of a longer payment schedule, and they chose to sell after the

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<sup>38</sup>According to Blair County historian Tarring S. Davis, "the first brewery in Altoona is reputed to be the one established by Albert Schultz, and later known as the Union Brewery." Although the brewery discussed here was known for a time as the Union Brewery, none of the people found to be associated with it was named Schultz. This does not rule out Schultz's involvement and the pioneering role of this brewery. Considering its location, however, and the pattern of development in early Altoona, it seems more likely that the city's first brewery was located closer to the tracks and the original city core.



property was clear in their name.

Haid bought out his partner's interest in lot Nos. 5 and 6 in 1874 and began consolidating other sections of the brewery complex under his ownership. He bought lot No. 8 in 1878, and lot No. 7 in 1886; clear title to lot No. 4 was transferred in 1891. The 1880 city directory called the business the Union Brewery, with an address at 1419 4th Ave. That year Haid was assessed for a house, brewery, and a stable. A stable and a substantial brewery structure appear on the 1894 Sanborn map.

Haid died in August 1886 and his widow, Mary, became proprietor of the brewery and struggled to deal with the consequences of his investments. Between 1889 and 1891 she took out more than \$10,000 in mortgages on the property and renamed it the Mountain City Brewery. She remarried, to Daniel Rittman, a brewer who boarded in her home at 1330 2nd Ave. in 1888. Although the 1891 directory lists Michael M. Kimmel and John Werner as proprietors, and the 1896 directory lists William Bender, at 1324 3rd Ave., as president, secretary, and treasurer, the business remained in Mary Haid Rittman's name. In 1896 she lost it at sheriff's sale to her mortgagor, Girard Fire and Marine Insurance Company of Philadelphia. Lot Nos. 4-10, measuring 250' x 120', were described in the deed as:

having thereon erected a three and four story brick building 46 x 85 known as Mountain City Brewery, a brick stable, a frame ice house, frame office building, two story frame tenant dwelling 20 x 44 with kitchen attached together with all permanent machinery such as an engine, boiler, brewing kettles, vats, tubs, and other machinery.

By 1900 directories no longer listed the brewery. In 1909 the property was sold to Charles F. Heinsling and William B. Batton, who converted the complex to service as the Logan Laundry Company. Probably as part of this conversion, the stable structure was enlarged with a brick-veneered extension on the north gable end sometime between 1909 and 1932. Charles's widow, Mary Eva Heinsling, sold the property for \$25,000 in 1944 to Elwood and Margaret Wertz, another family in the laundry business. They also owned Altoona Sanitary Laundry and Zoric Dry Cleaners at Oak Avenue and 28th Street in the Millville section of South Altoona.

A property card recorded in 1959 when the Wertz formed the Altoona Logan Corporation noted that "3 or 4 beer vaults" were buried on the property, "once a brewery." All buildings but the stable were destroyed by fire in 1967.

Sources: Maps: 1882, 1894. Deed books: U/161, 30/152, 35/679, 35/680, 37/586, 39/486, 49/565, 60/639, 84/493, 112/636, 156/413, 188/24, 956/952, 980/73. Mortgage books: W/500, 28/468, 31/337, 36/25. City directories. Tax assessment records. Davis, 131.

Martin Asbury Green House (Belmar Hotel)  
1501 4th Ave.

Built 1882

Description: This two-and-one-half-story, brick-veneered, frame hotel incorporates a succession of additions and materials. A three-bay dwelling with side-gable roof and enclosed front porch faces 4th Avenue. The first addition immediately behind but connected to the first section also has a side gable roof with a small bay dormer. It is also two-and-a-half stories and is flush with the street side of the front section.

Behind the first two sections is a two-story addition with a storefront entrance on 15th Street. Although this addition is faced with brownstone on the street side, the balance is concrete block that has been covered with stucco. A one-story addition at the extreme rear is concrete block and completed the dimensions that give the structure its L shape.

While residential in scale, the multiple additions of this single-family dwelling-turned-hotel cause it to ramble. Other features of note include a two-story protruding bay with brackets, a large shed dormer at the front, and a double front gable dormer.

History: Martin Asbury Green, a superintendent at the Altoona car works of the PRR, had the front portion of the current structure built as his residence in 1882. The house was built on a half-lot deeded to his wife, Leah, by



Fig. 5.50 Martin Asbury Green House (Belmar Hotel), 1501 4th Ave.



Fig. 5.51 Martin Asbury Green House (Belmar Hotel), 1501 4th Ave.

Elizabeth Dey in 1880. The widow Dey lived in a small, two-story frame dwelling on the southwest side of the lot. She subsequently died intestate and the remainder of the lot, 22' x 120', was sold by her heirs to Green in September 1888. Green apparently built at least some of the added portion at that time as his tax value for the property jumped from \$600 in 1888 to \$3,000 in 1889.

Thomas K. Maher, secretary and

treasurer of the East End Coal Company, purchased the brick house on the corner in August 1898 after Green had "removed to Philadelphia, PA." Maher was assessed \$4,000 for one lot and house in 1901.

H. O. McGough purchased the entire lot with dwelling in July 1903 from Maher, who must also have removed to another place as his name was dropped from the city directory. McGough immediately made improvements that added \$500 to the \$4,500 tax value he was originally assessed for his property. Mr. McGough established the property as a hotel at that time and he is listed as proprietor of the Belmar House in the 1904 city directory.

This was the beginning of the McGough family's long association as owners and proprietors of the Belmar Hotel. H. O., whose previous occupation had been travel agent, was succeeded in 1906 by Silas McGough, an agent for Prudential Insurance. Elmer McGough took over in 1919. C. Donald apparently assumed the position in the 1930s and remained as proprietor until the family's involvement ended in the mid-1960s. Zoe McGough, a public school teacher, who maintained the longest running residence at No. 1501, was first listed as boarding there in the 1904 city directory. She began her career as a grade school teacher at Penn School where she taught from 1917 until she transferred to the recently completed Roosevelt Junior High School in 1927. Apparently retired from teaching, the 1961 city directory lists her as a waitress at the Belmar. Zoe McGough sold the Belmar to experienced restaurateurs, Francis Gehl (The Dutch Kitchen) and Carl Grieco (Trianon Grill) in 1964.

The most recent owners, Alfred and Barbara Mignogna, purchased the property in 1984. They are continuing the tradition of the Belmar Hotel and have undertaken some restoration of it.

Sources: Maps: 1882, 1888, 1894, 1909. City directories. Tax assessment records. Deed books: 32/340-44, 42/289, 45/217-219, 71/52, 122/210, 119/349, 143/8, 242/582, 292/84, 819/353, 1099/572. ns.

Alfred Bentley House  
1509 4th Ave.

Built by 1870

Description: The small scale of the Bentley House is quite unusual. Its survival along with two other small-scale, gable-front houses in the older part of the survey area suggests that these dwellings may have been more common in Altoona's early days. Documents suggest the house was built using plank construction, a technique, that may be more common in Altoona than we yet realize.



Fig. 5.52 Alfred Bentley House, 1509 4th Ave. and 1511 4th Ave.

Two stories with a windowed attic level, the gable-front house has two narrow bays with an entrance at the right front and an exterior side chimney. The house has been covered in aluminum siding and there is no exterior ornament beyond the projecting eaves and wide cornice molding with returns at the base of the gable. A shed awning with wrought-metal supports provides a minimal porch.

There is no hallway in this house. Inside, two rooms are set one behind the other, with the winder stair between house and kitchen shed leading to two bedrooms above.

**History:** The Bentley House is one of the oldest structures selected for further study, and may in fact be more representative of the first generation of Altoona's domestic structures than current examples would suggest.

John Wright owned the property until August 1868, when a 50' x 120' lot was purchased by G. A. and M. J. McCullough for \$150. They sold it to Alfred Bentley two years later for \$700. The elevated price suggests that a house was built during their ownership. Bentley, a molder, was first taxed in 1871 for a house and lot. The 1873 city directory shows him living at 1511 4th Ave., probably the same house since renumbered (the current No. 1511 was vacant on the 1882 map). When the property was sold at sheriff's sale to the Franklin Building and Loan Association in 1875, it included "all that certain plank house" 14' x 28', two stories, with a 10' x 12' kitchen attached.

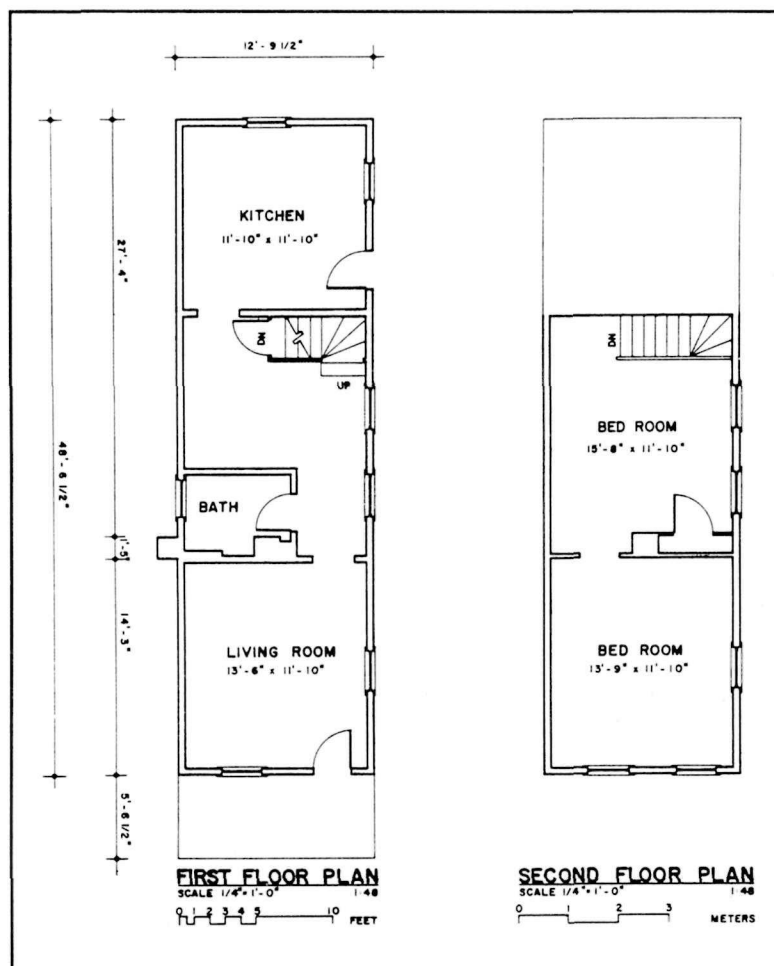


Fig. 5.53 Alfred Bentley House, 1509 4th Ave., first- and second-floor plans. Drawn by Anette A. Jensen.

Michael Conrad purchased the property for \$800 in March 1879. He appears in the 1882 directory, also working as a molder and living on 4th Avenue above 15th Street. By 1896, Conrad's widow, Lizzie, continued to live here along with Albert Conrad who worked as a butcher. When Elizabeth Conrad's executors passed the lot to Fred C. and Edna G. Conrad in September 1931, there was a two-story frame dwelling at 1509 and a two-and-one-half-story frame dwelling at 1511 4th Ave. (built by 1894). The Bentley House was then used as a rental property. Charles A. Bickel lived in the house in 1939. In 1946, the Bentley House and its 25' x 120' lot were transferred to Charles E. and Winifred Keyes. Charles Keyes died in 1965; in 1973 Winifred Keyes sold the house to Charles E. and Sue K. Hall, who kept it until 1978.

**Sources:** Maps: 1882, 1888. Deed books: W/49, Z/181, 39/337, 39/339, 530/49, 946/145, 1025/247. City directories. Tax assessments.



Fig. 5.54 Haller's Eagle Bakery, 1206-10 5th Ave.

Haller's Eagle Bakery  
(Pacifico Bakery)  
1206-10 5th Ave.

Built 1924-25  
Addition: 1938  
Addition: 1967

Description: A steady growth and enlargement is visible in the fabric of this commercial/industrial structure, the site of Haller's Eagle Bakery for more than seventy years.

Three sections faced in yellow brick with brownstone trim front on 5th Avenue. A main building of two adjacent two-story structures with compatible parapet facades is joined at

right by a later one-story addition. The central section, No. 1208, houses the current entrance at its left, at the approximate center of the main facade. It appears to have been built first, with the matching left-hand addition made soon after.

These two parts of the main double structure are similar but not identical. Although front windows in

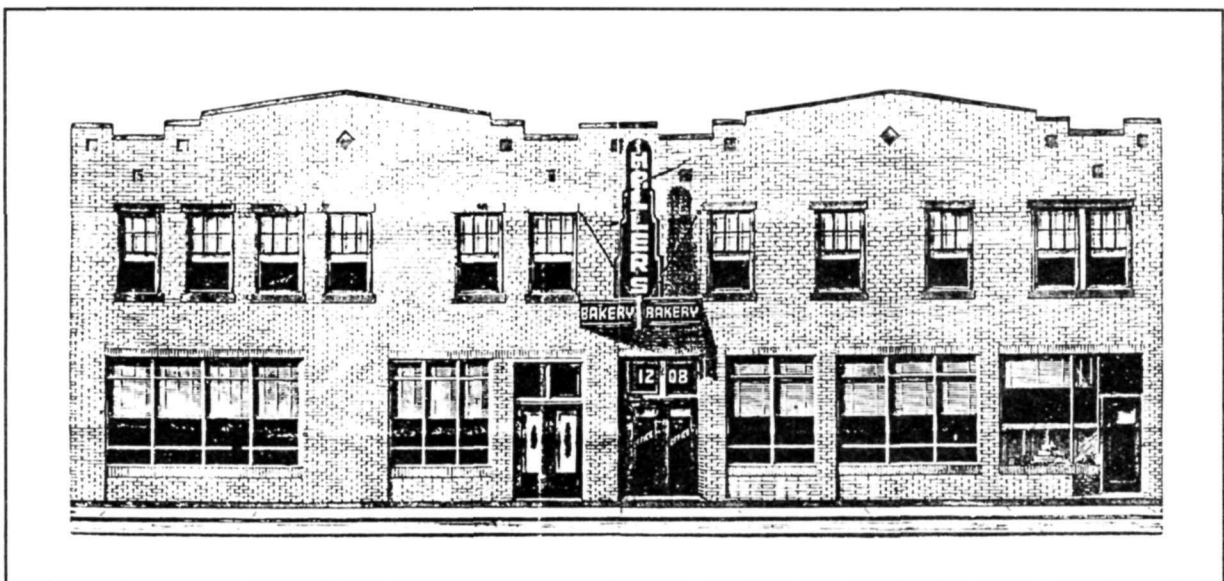


Fig. 5.55 Haller's Eagle Bakery, 52nd anniversary advertisement, Altoona Mirror (April 10, 1948).



the left are now infilled with brick, the patterning of infill and a 1948 advertisement illustration suggest that fenestration in the two sections was also similar but not identical. In each first floor, windows are grouped in twos and threes with sills and lintels of vertically-laid brick; in the second they are individually placed and trimmed in rough-faced stone. Inset square and diamond-shaped medallions provide trim to the simple parapets; these have been removed at left. A brownstone marker reading "John Haller" in relief is centered above the second-floor window level in the left-hand block. This facade has been extensively reworked--an entrance door at right is the only remaining opening, and five vertical steel supports have been applied to the exterior above the brick.

The one-story addition to the right of the main building has a central door with large glass-block windows at each side. Like the others, it has a yellow brick front with red brick side walls and a flat roof.

History: The first bakery on this site was that of Albert J. Heess, who purchased a 65' x 120' lot from Mary Miller (through the will of her father John) in April 1896 for \$5,000. The 1896 Altoona directory shows Albert J. Heess, Jr., a baker, at 1208 5th Ave., with his home at the same address. Heess was the son of A. F. Heess who ran the Altoona Steam Bakery at 8th Avenue and 13th Street. In 1900 Albert Heess Jr., was taxed as a baker at 1210-12 5th Ave., for 65' of land, a bakery, and one dwelling.

John Haller purchased the bakery (on its 65' x 120' lot) from Heess on September 5, 1903, for \$9,000. According to newspaper accounts, Haller was a German immigrant who served a baker's apprenticeship in Pittsburgh before coming to Altoona. He worked at two established Altoona bakeries before starting his own at 13th Avenue and 18th Street, where his business operated for eight years until he purchased the Heess bakery.

The exact chronology of building on this site is difficult to unravel, in part because the location of bakery operations seems to have moved within the complex of existing buildings. A combination of newspaper accounts, tax assessment records, Sanborn insurance maps, and stylistic considerations seem to indicate that the central section of the current street front structure was built in 1924 and 1925 as office and retail space. A two-story addition, the section at left, was made in 1938, when it was reported that

the new building in its architectural aspects will conform with the other buildings embraced in the baking firm's plant and will front on Fifth avenue, replacing an old structure on part of the site. It will be two stories high.

A 1948 full-page advertisement in the Altoona Mirror shows the completed two-part facade. The one-story addition at right was added in 1967.

John Haller added his wife, Anna, to all titles for the bakery property in February 1923. The business was incorporated in 1926 when his three sons became his partners. Through the 1930s, Fred J. Haller (wife Birdie B.) was foreman at the bakery, Fred M. was treasurer, John (wife Anna) was president, John Jr. (wife Alma) was secretary, and William M. was vice president. In April 1940, the Hallers consolidated their holdings, almost half a city block, under one deed in the name of Haller's Eagle Bakery. Soon after, Haller's three sons traded corporate positions.

Haller's Eagle Bakery was large and successful; this is evident in numerous newspaper articles highlighting new construction, equipment purchases, and the introduction of new products. Even during the Depression of the 1930s Haller's continued to expand and was declared Pennsylvania's model bakery. Yearly anniversary celebrations were written throughout the 1930-40s. Each year a new structural improvement was highlighted, and a special anniversary cake marketed in local stores.

Haller's Eagle Bakery at this site was sold to the Blair County Industrial Development Authority in

October 1978. The premises is currently rented to Pacifico Bakery, which uses it as a distribution center.

Sources: Maps: 1894, 1909. Deed books: R/286, 109/602, 144/564, 300/411, 453/55, 1022/186. City directories. Tax Assessment records. *Altoona Mirror* (December 16, 1926; November 11, 1930; November 3, 1934; April 12, 1936; September 23, 1938, October 14, 1941; July 24, 1942; April 13, 1947; April 10, 1948; February 14, 1967.

St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church  
1401 5th Ave.

Built 1871-83

Description: This simple brick church, with a center-steeple and a gable front has a square tower with gabled crest and eight-sided spire that projects slightly from the front wall of the building. Stained-glass windows in the front and sides, as well as the louvered lanterns in each tower face, have pointed Gothic arches with molded brick surrounds. The main Fifth Avenue entrance into the steeple originally had a similar arch, although it is now filled in, and first-floor doors and windows have been replaced with glass-and-steel versions.

Other decoration includes overall patterned corbelling in the brick, modest buttressing between bays on the side walls and at the tower, and the use of copper trim on the steeple. A second vestibule entrance is provided on the 14th Street facade.

The interior of this church has been significantly altered. The sanctuary, as was common in older churches, is located on the second floor. An added balcony and other altered doors and entryways obstruct many original stained-glass windows, some of which have been shortened. Marble-panelled walls, track lighting, and heating vents over the windows, as well as a bare altar and an unpainted wood crucifix figure at the front, make for a plainness uncharacteristic of many Catholic churches. The original decorative statues for the stations of the cross survive with their German-language legends.

History: In 1855 a small group of German families in Altoona, then worshiping at the English-speaking St. John's Church, first petitioned the Pittsburgh Diocese for a German-speaking pastor. The congregation was organized in 1860 and construction of a church was begun in that year. As a church-prepared history relates, the building was erected by church members after their day's work at the railroad shops. Officially named the Immaculate Conception Parish, St. Mary's was dedicated in December 1860.

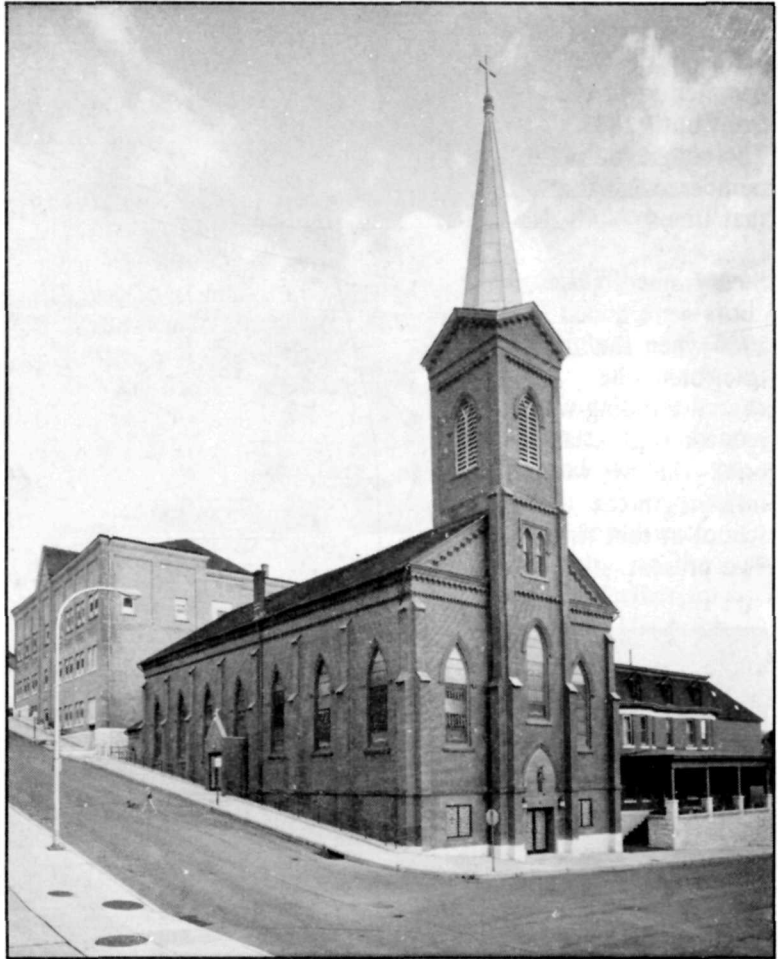


Fig. 5.56 St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church, 1401 5th Ave.

The present brick structure was built in stages. The rear half was erected against the wall of the original wood structure and was dedicated in June 1872. Economic recession delayed completion of the front until 1883. The congregation numbered 2,000 at that time.

Steel-framed, glass doors were added in 1960 when the exterior of the church building was redecorated. Glass brick windows were installed in the school at that time. The present

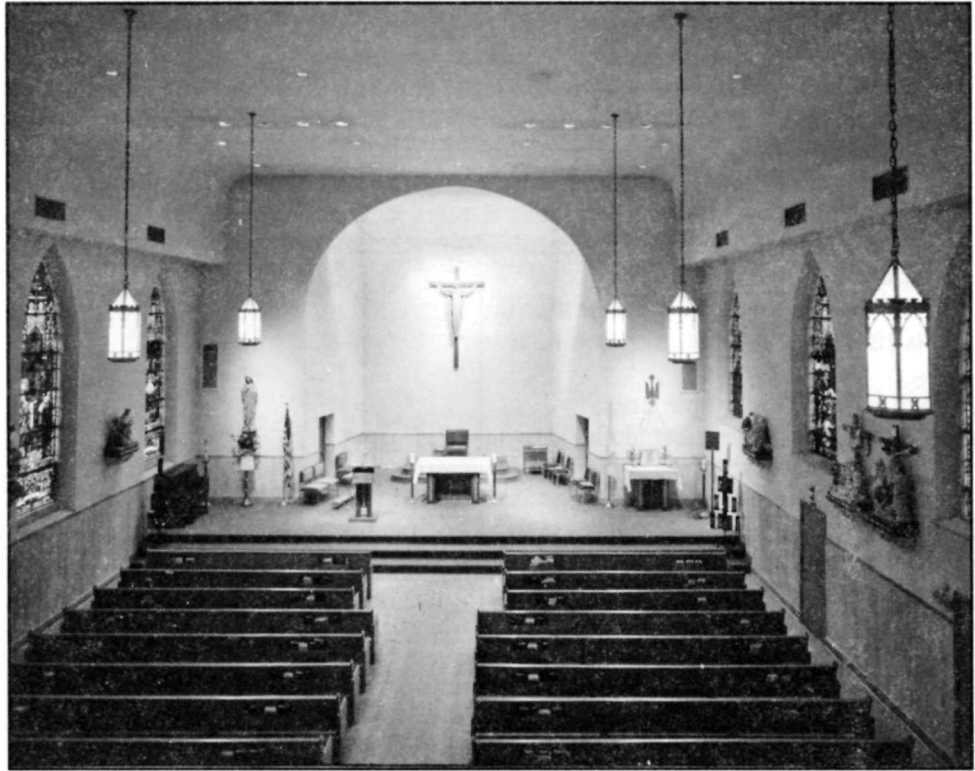


Fig. 5.57 St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church, 1401 5th Ave., sanctuary interior.

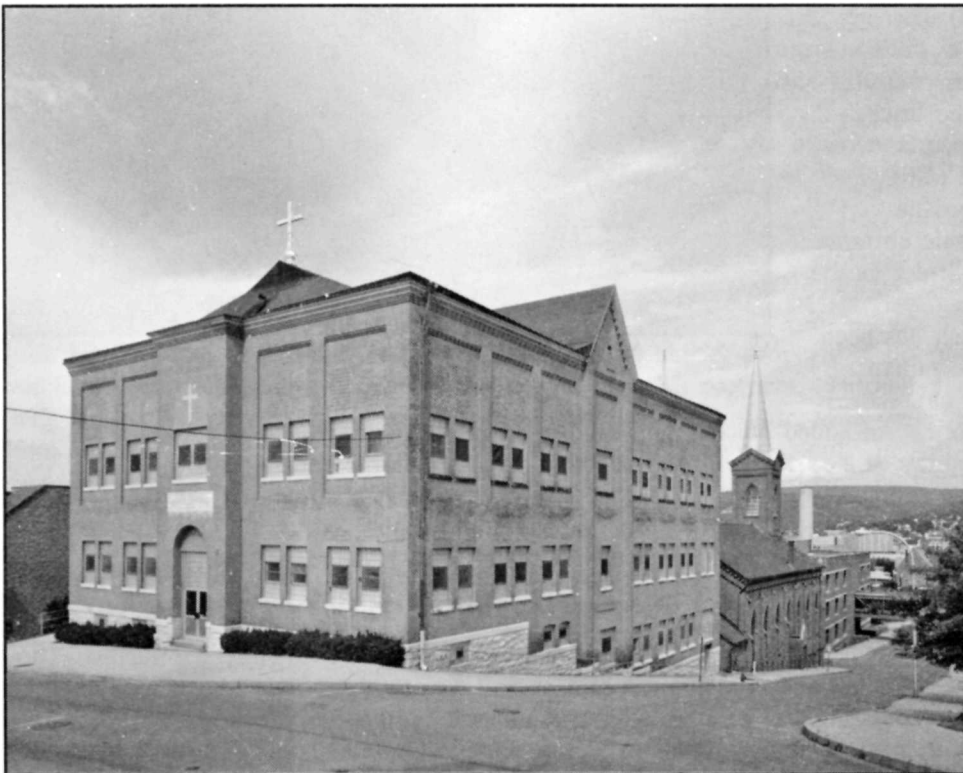


Fig. 5.58 St. Mary's School, 1400 4th Ave.

sanctuary dates from 1968 when it was remodeled in response to the directives of Vatican II. The work was supervised by George A. Friedrichs Company of Erie.

St. Mary's is surrounded by a number of affiliated parish buildings: a parochial school was begun as early as 1864 and the present brick St. Mary's School on 4th Avenue was built in 1889 on the site of a frame schoolhouse. The present convent building, housing the Sisters of St. Agnes,

a Wisconsin-based order, is also on 4th Avenue; the gambrel-roofed, brick structure was built in 1903, enlarged in 1924, and recently received extensive alteration. The mansard-roofed, brick rectory adjoining the church at 1405 5th Ave. was built by 1909. In 1949, another church-related structure, Memorial Hall--a multi-purpose center dedicated to parish members who served in WWII--was built, also on 4th Avenue. It incorporated an older YMCA building and was designed by the Altoona architectural firm of Hunter, Caldwell & Campbell and was supervised by the Moyer Brothers.

Sources: Maps: 1882, 1888. Africa, 179. Altoona Tribune (January 15, 1916). Illustrated Altoona, 84-85. "St. Mary's Parish--How it Started," Altoona Mirror clippings file; Altoona Mirror (September 26, 1936; October 3, 1940; August 11, 1941; August 23, 1943; July 29, 1949; August 5, 1949, August 5, 1960; August 17, 1960; July 22, 1968). Catholic Register (August 20, 1949. Art Work of Blair County, 1893.



Fig. 5.59 Joseph and Sarah Nixon House I, 1204 6th Ave.

Joseph and Sarah  
Nixon House I  
1204 6th Ave.

Built 1872

Description: Of the houses surviving in the Fourth Ward survey area, those on 6th and 7th avenues have a more typically urban appearance than those on the avenues farther up the hill. The brick Nixon house is wide and low to the street, completely filling its allotted space. Unlike many of its Altoona counterparts, it is constructed of solid brick rather than brick veneer.

The three-bay, three-story house has a mansard roof on its front and rear facades with two windows in the third-floor front. The entrance is at the right of the front facade, and a square, two-story bay projects from the right side wall. Windows have straight molded lintels and sills. The recessed front door is set behind a brickwork round arch in the house's front wall. A wood porch has been added to the left side. Still surviving in the side bay are elaborate, bowed, stained-glass windows.

History: This 50' x 120' lot was one of the earliest to leave Wright ownership. Henry Noel purchased it from Archibald and Jane Wright through John Wright as attorney in May 1855. Joseph and Sarah Nixon bought it, probably still unimproved, in March 1866 for \$400.

In 1870, Joseph Nixon, a foreman in the PRR boiler shop, owned a frame house here; he is listed as living here in 1873. In 1882, tax records indicate the house was brick-cased, valued at \$950. Nixon was also taxed for a gold watch, a horse, and a carriage.



By 1896, Joseph Nixon, Jr., a boiler inspector, was also listed in city directories at this address. Soon after, he built a house across the street at 1205 6th Ave. (Fig. 5.60), designed by Altoona architects Michael and Louis Beezer. Nixon, Sr., died in 1896; upon his wife's death in 1906, a daughter and grandson, Lettie N. Gamble and Joseph N. Gamble, inherited the property. Lettie's husband, William, lived here in 1907 and ran a grocery (William R. Gamble & Company) just a block away at 1231 7th Ave.

In November 1928 the property was sold to John and Naomi Johannadies. In 1930 he worked as a electrician. Although Joseph Gamble reassumed the deed with a mortgage in 1935, the Johannadies continued in residence; by 1939, she was working at Olmes Beauty Shoppe. In 1945, Mrs. Earl Olmes lived with the couple.

The house has since had a long succession of occupants. John E. and Helen I. Brooks purchased the property in June 1945 for \$3,700 but sold it the following year to Harold and Thelma Rellinger-Stafford for \$5,200. By 1947, Harold Rellinger and Howard R. Stafford lived here, both working as physicians at the same address. Later in 1947 the house was transferred to Cleo R. Karr, a widow. By 1948, Cleo Karr lived here with Margaret L. Karr who worked as ticket agent for Blue & White Lines Inc.

In 1951 Karr transferred the deed to D. B. Cunningham whom she married soon after. They lived here with various boarders throughout the 1950s. Cleo Cunningham sold the house to its present owners in August 1970.

Sources: Maps: 1882, 1888. Deed books: T/258, 376/672, 425/485, 510/296, 522/364, 562/399, 648/201, 907/226. Will book H/404. City directories. Tax assessment records. Beezer catalogue, 1899.

#### John and Ellen Eirhart House 1220 6th Ave.

Built ca. 1892

Description: This two-and-one-half-story, three-bay, cross-gable house is somewhat different from other surviving examples; a bargeboard in the front gable arches at the bottom to complement the arched top of the gable window (see, for example, the Healy house, 1415 3rd Ave.\*). Other windows are square with pedimented surrounds. Like many side-gable and cross-gable examples, the Eirhart House has four



Fig. 5.60 Joseph and Sarah Nixon House II, 1205 6th Ave., illustration from 1899 Beezer catalog.



pairs of brackets spaced below the front cornice with an additional pair below the returns at each side. A band of sawtooth applique runs beneath the eave. The house is clad in horizontal novelty wood siding.

Also unusual is the placement of fenestration in the front facade. Although the cross gable is symmetrically placed, the three second-floor windows and the door and picture window below are offset toward the left, creating an odd effect. A later brick porch with sawtooth corbelling and flat roof, typical of those found throughout the survey area, opens at left front directly to the house's front door. There is a narrow exterior side chimney. Cornice returns are boxed in on the side gables.

History: The present house appears to have been built on the site of an earlier and structurally similar building. In February 1862 John H. and Ellen G. Eirhart purchased a 50' x 120' lot from two Philadelphia merchants who had acquired the land from the Wrights six years before. John Eirhart, a molder, is listed at 1220 6th Ave. in the 1873 Altoona directory.

Tax records as early as 1866 show "Earhart," a molder, assessed for one frame house and lot at \$250. By 1871 he owned a house and

half-lot on 6th Avenue, and a double house on 7th Avenue. The present structure, however, is stylistically incompatible with such an early building date. It may be the one outlined on the 1882 Altoona map, but tax records suggest a later construction date. In 1892 Eirhart was taxed for 29' of land and a house with the current address valued at \$1,900. This is probably the first appearance of the present structure in records.

John Eirhart died on March 15, 1901, but his widow remained there in 1919. Ellen Eirhart passed the 27.4' x 120' lot containing this house to Vesta A. Hamilton in March 1923. Although she does not appear in the 1925 directory, the widow of Charles Hamilton lived here in 1930. Hamilton sold the house to Lester and Maude Berry for \$1,700 in 1936. The Berry family lived here in 1939: Maude E.; Lester, a crane operator; Helen K., a student; Grace E., a student nurse; and Ralph H., a member of the U.S. Navy. The Berrys acquired the title to 1222 6th Ave. as well; in 1950 they sold both properties to Harold F. and Mae R. Hanwell. In 1951 Harold and Mae R. Hanwell were in residence while he worked as an electrician for the PRR. Blanche R. Hanwell, a widow, also lived here. Harold Hanwell died in September 1968, after which the current owners acquired the property.



Fig. 5.61 John and Ellen Eirhart House, 1220 6th Ave.

Sources: Maps: 1882, 1888. Deed books: H/407, N/184, 305/630, 478/227, 625/184, 880/200. City directories. Tax assessment records.

Goodwill Fire  
Engine and Hose  
Company Engine  
House  
1231 6th Ave.

Built between 1882  
-85

Description: This large-scale, two-story, brick structure is one of Altoona's early fire houses. Currently a restaurant, its exterior remains mostly unchanged. The gabled front of the structure sports a wood cornice that clips horizontally below the gable point for a three-sided effect. Cornice returns have been enclosed but brackets

remain on front and side facades. Three wide window bays in the second floor are spaced over two first-floor entrance bays; the one at left is still configured as a garage door entrance for fire engines. Ceiling height is high--the two-story fire house is almost as tall as its three-story neighbors. A one-story, brick-veneered addition to the left of the main block first appears as a hose tower on the 1894 Sanborn map. Commercial-style wood brackets across the first-floor facade suggest an awning such as the one presently in use. There are four windows along the second-floor side facade; the first-floor one is bricked in and a door substitutes for another at the back edge of the buildings. Inset stone broken-arch window pediments have been picked out with white paint, as have several flat recessed panels in the brickwork of the gable front.

History: The Citizens Engine and Hose Company was organized April 21, 1859. Officers were elected on May 7. The company received its first engine from the Goodwill Company in Philadelphia and, in honor of this sponsor, was renamed the Goodwill Fire Engine and Hose Company, No. 1, in November 1859. The company's first building, at 9th Avenue and 12th Street, was built by another sponsor, the PRR. The company later relocated to a one-story frame building at the alley between 5th and 6th avenues. Greevy's 1873 Altoona city directory put the company's meeting place on 13th Street between 5th and 6th avenues.

The city of Altoona purchased the current site, a 50' x 100' lot, from Jonathan and Margaret Conrad on July 1, 1869, for \$1,600. In 1869 it was described as "having erected thereon a two-story frame building now in the occupance of J. M. Douney." The current brick building was built after 1882; the Goodwill Company moved in 1885. The structure was later known as Engine House No. 2, and by 1909 was



Fig. 5.62 Goodwill Fire Engine and Hose Company Engine House, 1231 6th Ave.

referred to as Fire Station No. 2. It retained that name at least through 1968. In 1978 the city sold three of its fire houses, this one to Patrick W. and Bernadine Dellape for \$12,100. The interior has been renovated as a bar and restaurant.

Sources: Maps: 1882,1888, 1894,1909. Deed books: K/222, X/568, 1023/1291. City directories. Altoona Centennial Booklet, 73. Illustrated Altoona, 117-18.

Altoona Area High School Annex  
6th Avenue & 14th Street

Built 1927-29

Architects: Frederic J. Shollar and Frank A. Hersh

Description: With three stories over the basement, this annex adjoined the rear of the original brownstone section of the high school and was deliberately plain in design. Completely engulfing the old auditorium, the annex extended to 14th Street and contained an open light court so that rooms on both sides of each corridor would have access to natural light.

The superstructure is steel reinforced with concrete and the facade is red brick with Indiana limestone trim. The south facade currently adjoins a square brick and glass entranceway, which replaced the brownstone building in 1973. There are two entrances each on the east and west facades and all have limestone surrounds with molded arches over the doors. These entrances, which also contain the stairwells, extend beyond the rest of the facade toward the avenues; molded panels contain the Pennsylvania state seal and a row of tiles. The entrance on the north facade was originally more elaborate than the others, but has been mostly obscured by a walkway over 14th Avenue connecting to a more recent annex.



Fig. 5.63 Altoona Area High School Annex, 6th Avenue and 14th Street.

Original fenestration on the north, east, and west sides was regular, but many windows were bricked in during the 1970 renovation, leaving no pattern to the remainder.

The interior was described in the 1929 yearbook by an appreciative member of the first class to use the new facilities. According to that article, the corridor walls had glazed buff brick on the lower five feet and smooth plaster above that to the ceiling. Corridor floors were linoleum and terrazzo while

classroom floors were white maple.

The new building contained fifty classrooms plus specialty areas on each floor. The basement contained the gymnasium and the vocational department, which consisted of an automobile shop, an electrical shop, a sheet-metal shop, a machine shop, and rooms for mechanical drawing. School offices, the study hall, the girls' gymnasium, two medical rooms, and the 1,350-seat auditorium were on the first floor. The second floor contained the library. The cafeteria, music rooms, and the household arts department containing cooking, sewing, and demonstration rooms were on the third floor.

History: In 1926, school board officials approved preliminary plans for enlargement of the high school building. The entire block between 5th and 6th avenues and 14th and 15th streets were cleared, including the dwelling of superintendent of schools Laramy at 1403 6th Ave. and the former Clement Jaggard home. To accommodate students meeting in the Jaggard building, two-session days were instituted.

A call for bids resulted in the submission of ten, with the local architectural firm of Hersh and Shollar being selected to design the expanded facilities. The resulting contract required the successful bidder to provide a consultant architect. Hersh and Shollar selected Frank Irving Cooper of Boston, one of the leading school architects in the country, to fulfill that stipulation. Cooper was on notice that he would be called upon to come to Altoona to consult, inspect, and advise on the work in progress. Dr. Jesse B. Davis, a member of Cooper's Boston staff and an authority on school-room arrangement, would be called upon to make recommendations regarding space allocation.

Begun July 1, 1927, twenty-nine of the classrooms were ready for classes in September 1928. The annex was completed February 1, 1929.

Sources: Maps: 1882, 1888, 1894, 1909, 1932, 1951. City directories. Tax assessment records. Deed books: E/446, 149/429, 1122/941. Altoona Mirror files on education and public schools. The Horseshoe, Altoona High School yearbook, 1929. ns.

### Theodore Roosevelt Junior High School 6th Avenue & 14th Street

Built 1922-24

Architect: Julian Millard

Description: This building is quite striking in spite of a few alterations to doors and windows. Because the walls paralleling the avenues are only slightly longer than those which parallel the streets, the building gives the impression of being square. The building has a skeleton of steel and reinforced concrete infilled with tapestry brick. The structure is three stories high above a full basement.

The building was designed to face Emerson Elementary School and the Lincoln Building. Although these two structures have since been razed, the north facade of Roosevelt is still the obvious focal point. The brick and limestone cornice in a Classical Revival style includes tablets with the date of construction "1923," molded limestone torches standing guard over the shield from the Pennsylvania state seal, and the images of a sailing ship, a plow and a harvest of wheat. Below a beltcourse on the north facade are the words "Letters, Art and Science" in symmetrically spaced limestone panels. Pedimented columns with a molded limestone panel displaying an open book introduce the front entrances. Unfortunately, the original doors have been replaced with solid metal doors which have been painted a very dark brown. Small porticos at each entrance have been rebuilt with red brick. The east and west sides of the front facade display a diamond pattern in the brickwork.

The west wall along 7th Avenue has entrances on the north and south ends. Above replacement doors are original hoods and brackets. Except for infill of glass block in the basement windows and some infill of brick in upper-story windows, the west facade retains most of its original features.

The south and east walls have both received treatments that greatly detract from the original design. Many of the windows on the south facade have been infilled with red brick. A rectangular metal bay encompassing the width of several windows protrudes from the left side of the second floor. There are no entrances in this end of the building. The east facade has entrances near its north and south ends. They are similar to the ones on the west side. Polychrome bricks have been used as infill for all of the basement windows on the east side along 6th Avenue.

The interior retains many of its original features and much original fabric. The auditorium occupies the center of the building and seats about 1,865.

Corridors surround the auditorium on all four sides. There are sixty classrooms on the four floors of the 6th Avenue side of the building. In addition, there are specialty rooms on each floor. The basement contains shop rooms and the boys' gymnasium while the girls' gymnasium is on the first floor. Rooms for art, music, science, domestic science, household

arts, and the library are on the second and third floors. The third floor also contains a large cafeteria in the rear. The school offices are located on the first floor, between the two entrances.

History: Planning for the first junior high school in Altoona probably began about 1920 when enrollment had reached a point where overcrowding became a critical issue. School board officials decided to erect a junior high school that would bring together seventh- and eighth-grade students from grade schools and ninth-grade students from the high school to alleviate space problems at both levels.

The board considered many sites, including the space now occupied by the 1929 High School Annex, before deciding on the 1500 block of 6th Avenue. The site was residential, at the time having twenty-one dwellings, two brick stables, a frame garage and a confectionery store. The school district purchased the property for a total of \$146,950.

Excavation of the site began in July 1922 and was closely followed in October of that year by the



Fig. 5.64 Theodore Roosevelt Junior High School, 6th Avenue and 14th Street.



contract for the erection of the new building designed by Altoona architect Julian Millard. Millard left Altoona to accept the newly created position of state architect at Harrisburg while the school was under construction. Total contracted cost for the building--including excavation, foundation, construction, heating, plumbing, and wiring--amounted to more than \$1 million.

The building was dedicated "with suitable ceremony," which made use of the new school's large pipe organ. The school opened its doors for classes in September 1924.

Sources: Maps: 1882, 1888, 1894, 1909, 1932, 1951. City directories. Tax assessment records. Deed books: E/446, 149/429, 1122/941. Altoona Mirror files on education & public schools. ns.

Jacob Good House  
1225--1225-1/2--1227  
7th Ave.

Built by 1881

Description: The Good House is one of two triple houses found in the survey area. It appears on early maps as a frame structure, having acquired its present brick veneer between 1909 and 1932.

Unlike row housing in which the interior separations are visually delineated on the exterior, this unified facade only reveals its function as a triple house through the presence

of three exterior doors. The two-and-one-half-story, tenement-style house is arranged in three, two-bay sections and has a steeply pitched side-gambrel roof with gable-front double-window dormers. Its close placement to the adjacent structure at right, and the lack of windows in the exposed side facade, indicate the urban intention of its form.

There is little ornament beyond a modestly molded wood cornice. A one-story front porch with square columnar supports has separate steps to each front door.

History: Although an exact date for this structure has remained elusive, the lot on 7th Avenue represents one of the earliest purchases researched. Henry Eicholtz bought a 50' x 120' lot from Archibald and Jane Wright for \$100 on January 2, 1854. When Eicholtz sold the lot with buildings for \$700 to Ebenezer Mead of Altoona in October 1856, he was described as resident in Ogle County, Illinois. Meade and his wife, Mary A., sold the property "with the house and improvements" to Jacob Good for \$750 nine months later.



Fig. 5.65 Jacob Good House, 1225--1225-1/2--1227 7th Ave.

Thus, some sort of structure was present when Good purchased the property in 1857. Earliest tax records are not revealing since Good owned a number of properties that are not enumerated by address. The first tax entry referring explicitly to this property appears in 1885, when it is called "1 lot & 3 Houses 7th ave." A corresponding listing for 1881 refers to "1 single & 1 double house," probably the same property, suggesting also that the present structure started as a double house with the third section added. Three connected structures appear on the 1882 Altoona map.

The core of the house may be much older. Tax records show that in 1867, the year of purchase for this property, Good had a lot and double house in the East Ward. In 1862 he had a double frame house and two frame houses in the East Ward. A double house and another house both in the East Ward were credited to Good as early as 1858. Good, who never lived at this address, had various occupations including attorney, agent, and "gentleman."

The property was described as three connected frame tenements when it was sold for \$3,300 in September 1900 to O. P. Bush for the benefit of Good's creditors. In 1907, Oliver P. Bush was a foreman living at 604 4th Ave., along with Carrie & Roberta Bush who ran a dressmaking business. Bush died intestate and his heirs consolidated the title under Carrie B. Prough in August 1926. In 1930, Carrie B. and Jacob C. Prough were living at 911 5th Ave., while he worked as a gang foreman. Carrie B. Prough died intestate on May 12, 1952, and the family vested the property in her daughter Elda Marie Schell in July of that year. After seventy years in the family, Elda M. and her husband James H. Schell, Sr. sold the property to its current owner in 1970 for \$6,500.

Altoona residents are listed by address in city directories starting in 1939. Thus, in the first year when it is possible to tell who is resident at this property, we find: at No. 1225 Jesse (reporter for Mirror Printing Co.) and Anne R. Sell; at No. 1225-1/2 William Turbett, no occupation given; at No. 1227, a physician, Frank DeSantes and his wife Grace D., and Almerinda DeSantes, a nurse who worked and resided here. Residents at the house in 1953 were William Replogle, a clerk for the PRR, and his wife Alma (No. 1225), William Turbett (No. 1225-1/2), and Saul Books, a foreman for the PRR and his wife Thelma K. (No. 1227).

Sources: Maps: 1882, 1888, 1894, 1909, 1932.  
Deed books: 106/94, 106/95, 65/465, 128/174, 352/301, 661/163, 911/409. City directories.  
Tax assessment records.

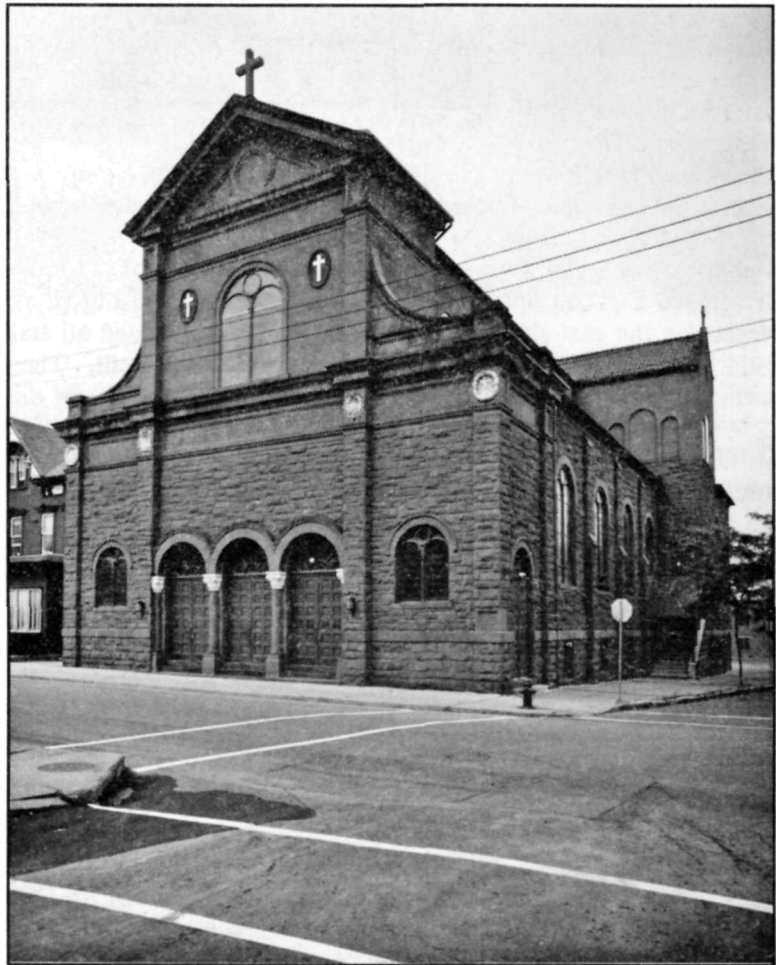


Fig. 5.66 Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Catholic Church, 8th Avenue and 11th Street.

Our Lady of Mount  
Carmel Catholic  
Church

8th Avenue and 11th  
Street

Built 1912, 1922-23  
Architect: D. G.  
Puderbaugh

Description: This Italian Renaissance-style brownstone church has a Latin-cross plan that measures 60' x 120'. The stone bearing walls are faced with a rough-faced random-course brownstone ashlar, with smooth-faced brownstone used for trim and the upper story. The nave is two stories, the side aisles one. The central entrance is composed of an arcaded trio of arched openings on the front facade.



Fig. 5.67 Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Catholic Church, detail of entrance on 8th Avenue facade.

History: The congregation of the Italian population of Altoona was formed in 1905, although it was not designated a parish until 1911. The parish was carved out of St. Mark's, and extended from 8th to 15th streets on the east side of 8th Avenue, and also included all Italians in the city. A school was started in 1911 with 325 pupils, and in 1912 a new school was built. Then the previous building, which served as a church and school, was demolished and construction began on a new church.

Ground was broken for the facility on June 20, 1912, and on August 25 more than 6,000 people attended the laying of the cornerstone. At that time, Bishop Garvey announced that completion of the building would have to be postponed, due to the large debt the parish had incurred. The basement was roofed over, and for over ten years the congregation met there.

Construction recommenced in 1922, and the building was dedicated by Bishop John J. McCort on December 16, 1923. The mortgage was paid off in 1950. In 1953, the interior was decorated for the first time. The church seats 700.

Sources: Our 75 Years Together. Altoona Tribune (August 24, 1912; January 15, 1916). kh.

Our Lady of Mount Carmel School  
1012 8th Ave.

Built 1912

Description: This red brick school has brick load-bearing walls and a red brick front with limestone

ornament. Three stories tall, it measures 47' to the roofline. The facade is divided into three bays separated by pilasters. The windows are flat-arched and are partly infilled with glass block. The front door is now in an end bay.

**History:** Ground was broken for this school on May 3, 1912; construction was completed by August 24. The interior, according to a contemporary description, had a large entrance hall, classrooms to seat 500, and a large auditorium. It was "well lighted by electricity and well ventilated." Construction cost \$25,000. In 1954 the school was remodeled, and the entrance was moved from the center to one end of the facade.

**Sources:** Our 75 Years Together. Altoona Tribune (August 24, 1912, January 15, 1916). kh.

Eighth Avenue Methodist Episcopal Church (Faith United Methodist Church)  
1227-31 8th Ave.

Built 1902



Fig. 5.68 Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Catholic Church, interior.

**Description:** This substantial stone church on a corner lot is built in random ashlar with carved stone details. A gabled pavilion on each facade intersects a central hipped roof with square tower that rises over the rounded interior sanctuary space. The corner entrance and bell tower, taller in height although now somewhat truncated, has entrance bays at each street front. Below the two street-front gables are large stained-glass windows--the western one is arranged in three round-arch sections, the southern is a single arched window in tribute to merchant Clement Jaggard and his wife Annie Jane Wright Jaggard. With the exception of small pointed-arch windows at roof height on the tower fronts, all window and door surrounds display Romanesque-style arches. The interior is organized as an amphitheater; the three-manual pipe organ was a gift of Andrew Carnegie.

The church building extends back to the east along 13th Street in several sections; an additional towered section joins a separately conceived back section with cross-gable roof line, and to a flat-roofed, two-story addition beyond that.

At present the bell tower ends in a vinyl-covered stump with a short hipped roof. An old photograph shows the flat-topped stone structure topped by an eight-sided open pavilion with cone-shaped roof. This was removed by 1967; the vinyl was added twenty years later. Other alterations include sandblasting, repointing, and the encasing of stained-glass windows in aluminum, all completed in 1967. An adjacent parish house was razed.



History: The current stone church on this site was built in 1902 to house the 8th Avenue Methodist Episcopal Church, replacing the earlier brick structure that dated from 1870. The earliest church structure on this site was the temporary pine chapel built by the Second Methodist Episcopal congregation after its organization in February 1868--the name change to 8th Avenue Methodist Episcopal Church accompanied the erection of a permanent building. Through



Fig. 5.69 8th Avenue Methodist Episcopal Church, 1227-31 8th Ave.

denominational mergers, the congregation became Eighth Avenue Methodist in 1939 and Faith United Methodist in 1972. This latest change occurred through the merger of Eighth Avenue Methodist with the newly formed Methodist Faith Evangelical United Brethren congregation, whose church at that time was located at 6th Avenue and 11th Street. "The new congregation, the only one of its kind in the Altoona area, adopted the name of the former Faith Church and the building of the former Eighth Avenue Church" (Altoona Mirror).

Rev. W. M. B. Glanding discussed the early organization of the church in a 1916 article, "Eighth Avenue When the City was a Village." Mr. J. W. Webber purchased the corner lot for the congregation. The first pastor was Rev. W. Maslin Frysinger. Glanding reported that while the first brick church was being erected, a storm caused one wall to fall through the chapel roof destroying everything but the cabinet organ.

Sources: Maps: 1882, 1888, 1894, 1909. Africa, 176. Altoona Mirror (August 29, 1967; October 11, 1968; November 24, 1973; October 28, 1978; March 25, 1987). Altoona Tribune (January 15, 1916). Photographs in Altoona Mirror files.

#### St. Luke's Protestant Episcopal Church 8th Avenue and 13th Street

Built 1881-81  
Architect: Frederick Clarke Withers

Description: This modest, Gothic-influenced stone church is built on a rectangular plan, and features a nave with side aisles. The building measures approximately 60' x 100' and is constructed of an Ohio



sandstone, laid in random courses of rough-faced ashlar, trimmed with smooth-faced. The gable roof has a larger wood belfry (80' high) with a pinched steeple over the 13th Street entrance, and a smaller one of the same shape on the opposite end. The gable end, facing 13th Street, has two pointed-arch windows. The nave windows have trefoil tops. The aisle walls are buttressed.

A newspaper article written at the time of the cornerstone laying, described the building:

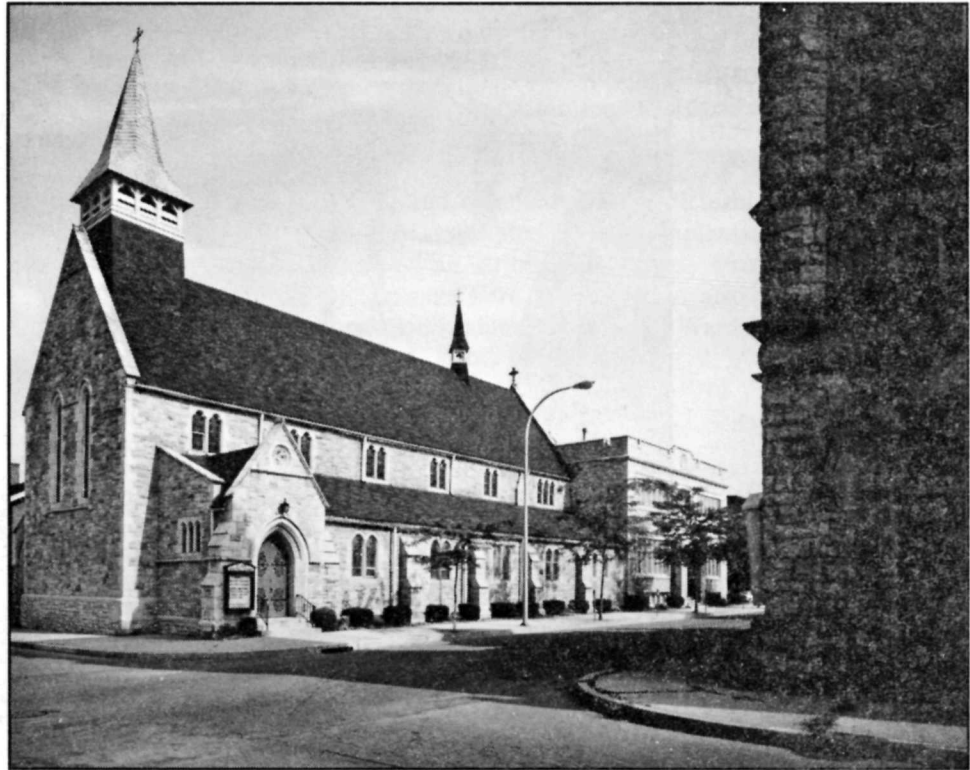


Fig. 5.70 St. Luke's Protestant Episcopal Church and school building, 8th Avenue and 13th Street.

The surface stone which will be used is from the Berea, Ohio, quarries. This is a soft grayish-blue, most agreeable to the eye, harmonizing nicely with the dressed stone to be used, which is from the Amherst quarries of Ohio, known as the Clough stone. The style of the building is Old English, and the dimensions virtually one hundred by sixty feet. It will have a nave with aisle walls, arcade columns supporting arches, with a clere-story over. The chancel and nave will be under the same roof, separated, however, by a lofty brick arch. There will be an organ chamber on the south side of the chancel, a robing-room for the clergy on the north side. There will be two porches easy of access, one on Eighth Avenue near the corner, the other on Thirteenth Street. Between the two porches, abutting on the west gable, and, as it were, at the entrance to the church, rises a foundation for the baptistery, supporting a stone font of large dimensions. The church will seat five hundred people, and will have three aisles, the centre one being five feet wide and convenient for processions. The aisle walls from the floor to the proper height will carry the necessary wainscoting of ash, the same material of which the seats will be constructed. The aisle and clere-story windows, made of rolled cathedral glass, of various tints with geometrical designs, will be used until replaced by memorials with stained glass. . . .

History: St. Luke's was founded in 1856. PRR officials were early and active members. The first church was erected on the site of the parish house on 8th Avenue in 1856, and the second one, of stone, on this site in 1858.

In 1881, ground was broken for this third church. Masons laid the cornerstone on September 3, 1881, and the building, which seated 500, was completed on January 15, 1882. The cost of the structure and furnishings was \$40,000, of which \$17,000 was contributed by Thomas A. Scott, PRR president, and \$12,000 by George Whitney of Philadelphia. In 1911, the church was described as "the most beautiful in Altoona up to that time."

Its designer was Frederick Clarke Withers (1828-1901), a prominent English-born architect distinguished for his churches. Withers was part of the Anglican ecclesiological movement that advocated a new approach to church building. This church, likened to English parish churches, is a good example of the genre, and was published in national publication Building.



Fig. 5.71 St. Luke's Protestant Episcopal Church, interior.

Sources: Africa, 174-5, quoting Altoona Tribune (September 5, 1881).

Kowsky, "Withers, Frederick Clarke"; "The Architecture of Frederick C. Withers"; The Architecture of Frederick Clarke Withers. "St. Luke's Episcopal Church." Sell, 369. "St. Luke's Church, Altoona, Pa." kh.

#### St. Luke's Rectory 806 13th St.

Built 1858

Description: This two-story brick house has a side-gable roof and a three-bay front. The brick-bearing walls are faced with brick laid in a common bond, and they appear to have been sandblasted. Although the sash has been altered, the windows have molded cornices that are probably original. The door surround is pilastered, pedimented, and is probably not original.

History: The church history states that this building was constructed in 1858, making it one of the earliest surviving brick buildings in Altoona. This was the first rectory built by the St. Luke's Episcopal Church congregation, which was founded in 1856. According to an 1883 article, the rectory served as a stop on the underground railroad, and the Rev. Robert W. Oliver concealed John Brown in the room over the study for several weeks.

Sources: "St. Luke's Episcopal Church." "The Heart of the Alleghenies." kh.

#### St. Luke's Parish House 8th Avenue and 13th Street

Built 1915-17  
Architect: Julian Millard

Description: This two-story stone building is vaguely Tudor in style. The walls are brick, faced with random-coursed, rough-faced ashlar. There is a parapet at the roofline and a small cornice below. The windows are divided into three bays. On the end bays six windows are banded together under one hoodmold; the three windows in the second-floor center are banded together.

History: The cornerstone of this building is dated 1915, and a January 1916 article notes that the building is "now nearing completion." The church history states that it was completed in 1917, and cost \$40,000. The parish house contained a gymnasium as well as various classrooms. From 1917 until 1925, all Altoona Senior High School basketball games were played here. The YMCA also used the gym facilities, probably until it had taken over the Altoona Gymnasium in the First Ward in 1931.

Sources: "St. Luke's Episcopal Church," Altoona Tribune (January 15, 1916). kh.

Second Presbyterian Church  
(Cathedral of Christ the Good Shepherd)  
1315 8th Ave.

Built 1870-71, 1875-77

Description: This church is unusual for the Fourth Ward because it is not built on a corner. The structure consists of two main sections; a brick sanctuary fronts on 8th Avenue while an older stone chapel runs to the edge of the alley at the rear.

The rear stone chapel, of the same width as the sanctuary, has a single side-gable ridge running parallel to 8th Avenue; it is thus not visible when the church is viewed straight on. In each gable end are two tiers of thin round-arched windows surrounded in brick and installed with non-pictorial stained glass. In the taller upper tier, the central window extends beyond those at each side, drawing the eye into the steeply pitched gable. Two faceted brick furnace chimneys protrude above the gable of the northern stone wall. Inside, the main chapel space is on the second floor.

The sanctuary, constructed in red brick with buff brick and stone accents, takes its form from intersecting gables on three sides, which create a rounded interior with

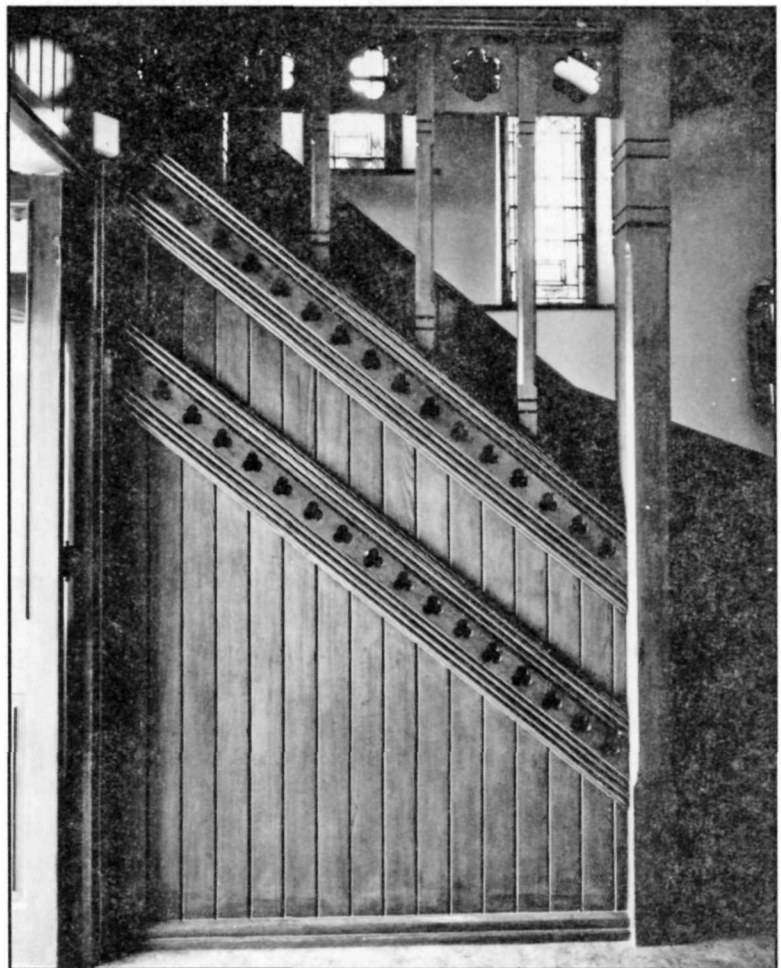


Fig. 5.72 Second Presbyterian Church, 1309-15 8th Ave., interior detail of staircase in main sanctuary building.

three deep balconies and pulpit at the rear. A large pointed-arch stained-glass window is installed in each gable. Entrance towers rise from each front corner; a bell tower at right is now missing its steeple, while a shorter tower at the left has a pyramidal roof. Buff, glazed brick forms rows of horizontal banding in the front gable and bell tower and outlines the large gable windows, tower windows, and the rows of smaller stained-glass windows below each gable face. Window sills, along with entrance



Fig. 5.73 Second Presbyterian Church, 1315 8th Ave.

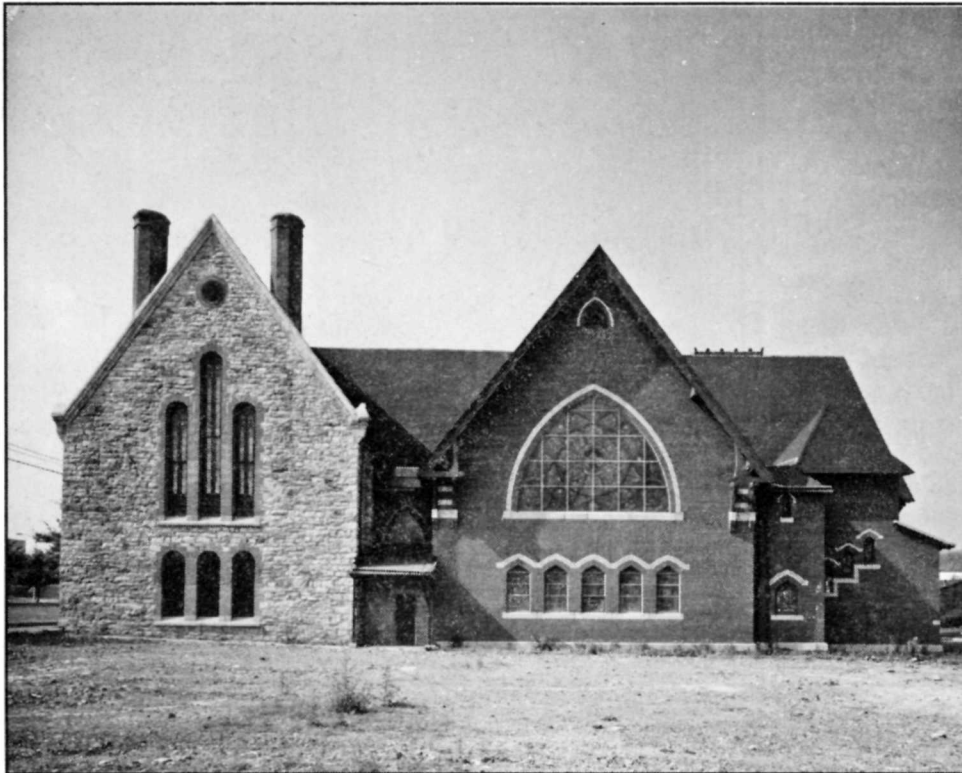


Fig. 5.74 Second Presbyterian Church, 1315 8th Ave., northeast facade.

arches and columns, are in stone, as are diagonal faces in the decorative buttressing of the front wall and left-hand tower. Although Stick-style bargeboards seen in an early photo are gone from the projecting eaves of each gable front, wood and metal brackets joining from the gable corners to the wall face below remain.

The sanctuary interior was described in the December 18, 1876, issue of the Altoona Mirror as "with few exceptions, the most



beautiful and commodious and well-arranged audience room in the State of Pennsylvania."

The galleries are reached from both the front and rear ends of the building. The pews are arranged in amphitheater form with four centre and two side aisles, are made of ash timber are cushioned, free, and are furnished with the Hymnal. The floor has a declination of two feet and is carpeted. There are a front, side and organ galleries, all finished in ash and well supported. The seating capacity is 1,300.

Alterations to the church include the removal of the steeple in 1939, and a major renovation in 1960, which included the installation of new pews, removal of the central chandelier, and enlargement of the pulpit platform. For a short time the brick walls were painted, but have now been sandblasted to restore their original appearance. In the 1876 description of the structure, the rear chapel is referred to as brick. It also appears as brick on the 1882 map, although it is shown in stone by 1888. If stone siding was added later, this may explain the presence of brick window surrounds in this section.



Fig. 5.75 Second Presbyterian Church, 1315 8th Ave., interior, main sanctuary.

History: Currently home to a religious group called Servants of the Good Shepherd, this structure was built during the 1870s as Altoona's second Presbyterian church. The Second Presbyterian Church was first organized in June 1869 by forty members of the First Presbyterian Church on the city's west side. William M. Lloyd, the Altoona banker, was an influential founding member. By 1870 there were 472 members, by 1880, 507. The present structure was the congregation's first, built while services were held at Bell's Hall on 7th Avenue at 12th Street. The chapel at the rear of the property was constructed in 1870-71 at a cost of \$28,000 while the large and impressive main sanctuary, built during 1875-77, cost \$62,965.65 to complete. Land for the building was purchased officially from John Wright in September 1876.

The construction of the Second Presbyterian Church was an ambitious undertaking--this is clear from the large size and stylistic sophistication of the building, erected as the first structure of a congregation not yet firmly established. An article in the Altoona Tribune of January 27, 1876, explained Altoona's social and religious context at the time of the main sanctuary's construction:



THE GREAT AWAKENING--Never in the history of this city, has there been such a vast religious inquiry manifested as at this time. Our evangelical churches are nightly crowded with attentive and serious audiences. . . . The work in the Second Presbyterian church has been a very gracious one, and there seems to be no abatement of the interest. Every night during the past week the church has been filled to overflowing. On Sunday morning one hundred and twenty-two persons were received into full membership on profession and eight by certificate, as the result of the past few weeks' labor.

By December, a full issue of the Altoona Mirror was devoted to the congregation and its new building, making clear the evangelical and modern aspirations of these Presbyterians. The author explained that "as a people we are fully awake to the fact that we are living in the latter half of the 19th century and that it won't do to carry on a church as it was done fifty or a hundred years ago."

The architectural consequences of this approach were also explained:

If the modern amphitheatrical audience room is better calculated to reach the masses than one constructed on the gloomy medieval style, we have said to our architect give us the circular seats and the slanting floor.

The name of the architect is unfortunately omitted.

Effective January 1, 1981, the Second Presbyterian Church of Altoona merged with the Broad Avenue United Presbyterian Church. The Broad Avenue church building became the home of the new congregation, which sold this structure to the United Southern Baptist Chapel in August of that year. In July 1982, the name was changed to Solid Rock Southern Baptist Church.

The church building was acquired by the Western Orthodox Church in America in October 1986. The Servants of Christ the Good Shepherd are a Catholic splinter group that has received controversial and negative press in the Altoona Mirror and other western Pennsylvania publications.

Sources: Maps: 1882. Africa, 172. Illustrated Altoona, 83. Photographs in Altoona Mirror files. "A History of the Second Presbyterian Church, Altoona, Pa," Altoona Mirror (December 18, 1876, 1-2; July 22, 1939; October 19, 1939; October 18, 1960; September 2, 1969. Mirror Almanac and Home Reference Book (Altoona: H. & W. H. Slep, 1899), 39. Deed books: 1068/401, 1133/982.

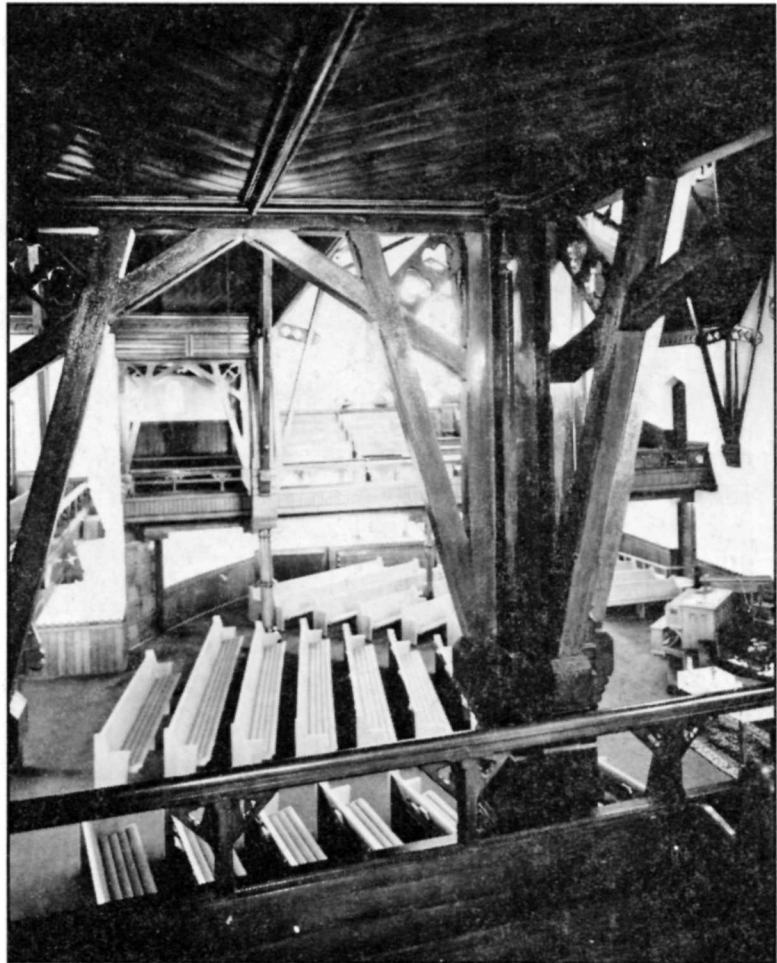


Fig. 5.76 Second Presbyterian Church, 1315 8th Ave., interior, main sanctuary.

John and Annie Fearbeck House  
1323 8th Ave.

Built 1908

Description: The two-and-one-half-story, brick-veneer Fearbeck House rests on the site of an earlier frame dwelling. While its gambrel-front roof shape is fairly common for the Fourth Ward, the elaborate hexagonal left-corner tower with bell-shaped cap merging into the facade, is unusually sophisticated. This stylization corresponds, however, to the location of this house on the busier and more commercial 8th Avenue.



Fig. 5.77 John and Annie Fearbeck House, 1323 8th Ave.

Beyond the curved lines of the tower's cap, visual interest is added to the house through a wide wood cornice which returns at the foot of the gambrel gable, a central Palladian window within the gable, and inset stone window lintels and sills on the front facade. There is continuous stone banding above and below the tower windows. A squared-off porch with stone foundation and three columnar supports opens into the entrance door at left. An exterior chimney rises from the side of the house just behind the tower.

History: In March 1907 John Fearbeck acquired a 25' x 120' lot from Thomas A. Wiggins, a foreman in the flue shop of the PRR who had owned the lot since 1874. At that time a two-story, plank and weather-boarded dwelling house at 1323 8th Ave. was described.

In 1907, Wiggins was still taxed for the property, valued that year at \$1,800. The following year, it was added to the list under Fearbeck's name, valued at \$2,800. The year 1908, then, is the probable construction date, as the house appears outlined on the 1909 Sanborn insurance map. Fearbeck was a butcher who also owned 1322-24 8th Ave., just across the street. By 1912 he was listed as resident at this address; in 1925 his widow Annie continued to live here. She willed the property to Frederick W. Olmes.

Olmes's wife, Audrey, sold it to Vito and Rosa Ciccarella for \$3,000 in September 1939. In 1939 Emma Dodson, a widow, was renting the house. The Ciccarellas--Vito and Rose Ciccarella, and Joseph

M. and Rose--moved in by 1941. By 1953, Joseph and Rose lived here, while Joseph ran Chick's Billiards at 818 12th St. The house is still owned by the Ciccarella family.

Sources: Maps: 1894, 1909. Deed books: R/317, T/274, 31/561, 172/456, 447/602, 629/73, 940/910, 1002/411, 1013/270, 1132/550. City directories. Tax assessment records.

Samuel L. and Lettie McCarthy House  
(Gilden Barton  
Funeral Home)  
1329 8th Ave.

Built 1888

Description: This substantial brick-veneered and mansard-roofed house on an 8th Avenue corner lot was originally built as a doctor's residence and office. The vertical lines of the three-story structure with its long, close-set windows are further emphasized by two three-story hexagonal towers with faceted caps rising at both southern corners of the house.



Fig. 5.78 Samuel L. and Lettie McCarthy House, 1329 8th Ave.

The lower curve of the mansard projects above alternating large and small brackets, running along the cornice of a two-story, gabled rear addition as well. This has the effect, along with the flat roof of a one-story porch, of visually dividing the structure by floor. Decorative stone banding with impressed flower motifs runs between floors on the tower exterior. The upper mansard section is tiled in slate, has a uniform bracketed cornice and pedimented dormers with round-arched windows.

The house is a substantial four to five bays wide (three plus the tower) with a central entrance. A low, one-story brick garage has been attached to the rear of the structure.

Except for its placement on a corner lot, this house is similar to another Altoona dwelling, located at 1409 13th St., on the west side of the city. While the McCarthy house has been painted, this other example has not, so that the original red brick and dark stone trim are discernible.

History: The McCarthy House, in its showy grandeur, exemplifies the use of architecture to accord individual prominence and status. The present house was built in 1888 on the site of an older frame dwelling by a newly arrived Altoona resident. Clark's 1888 Altoona city directory lists Samuel L. McCarthy, "physician, lately from Huntingdon Co., office and residence now building at cor[n]er of

Eighth ave and Fourteenth St. o h do [owns home ditto]."

Tax records show that in 1888 Dr. A. F. McCarthy was a nonresident owning a corner lot, house, and stable at 1331 8th Ave. worth \$800. In 1889, however, he had a large brick house worth \$6,000, a lot with double house worth \$1,000, and a livery stable all at this same 1331 8th Ave. address. The following year he was also taxed for a horse. The new house was apparently thought to be outstanding, as it is pictured in *Illustrated Altoona*, a promotional volume dating from 1896.

The current phase of the structure's history as the Gilden Barton Funeral Home began when Otto Gilden purchased the front 50' x 83' property and current house in July 1923 for \$18,000. By 1925, he was listed in directories as a funeral director and embalmer at 1329-31 8th Ave., living at the same address. By 1930, Harry L. Barton was an embalmer working for Gilden. In 1931 title to the property was transferred to the Bartons. As of 1939, Gilden and Barton had formed Altoona Casket & Burial Case Company, with an address on Pleasant Valley Boulevard, where Barton and his wife Ruth resided. Gilden continued to live at the 8th Avenue address, still called Gilden's Funeral Home and Supply Company at that time.

Since 1940, title to the property has passed among various intermarried members of the Gilden and Barton families. The property is currently used as a residence and mortuary.

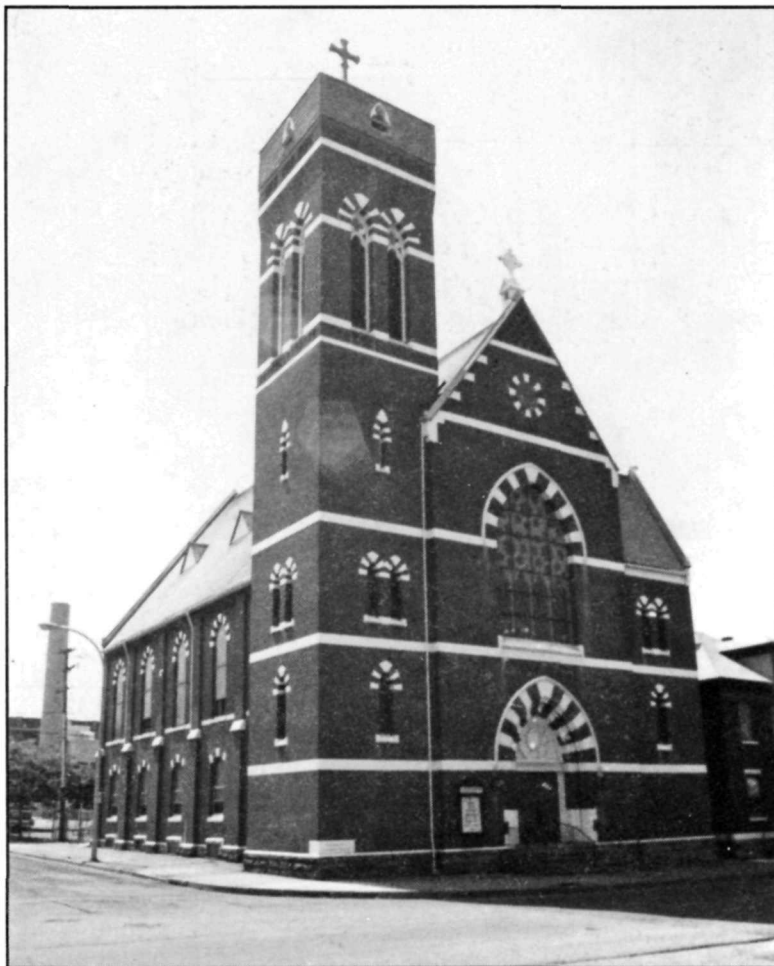


Fig. 5.79 St. James German Evangelical Lutheran Church, 1401-05 8th Ave. 35 mm photo.

Sources: Maps: 1888, 1894. Deed books: V/162, V/488, 41/32, 67/673, 624/54, 61/636, 309/314, 403/181. City directories. Tax assessment records. *Illustrated Altoona*, 7.

St. James German Evangelical Lutheran Church  
1401-1405 8th Ave.

Built 1889-90  
Builder: Anton Meyer

Description: This red brick church building is the second on this site, built by the congregation when it outgrew its original frame structure. Although this church on a corner lot is a side-steeple form with the gable end of the long roof ridge facing front, the main entrance door is placed in the center of the front facade rather than in the tower section at left. At right a pavilion ending in a gabled wall projects to the side, balancing the visual weight of the vertical tower.

Trim of both brick and stone provides rows of horizontal banding across the front facade, in addition to related banding on round and pointed-arch windows surrounds.



These are picked out in white paint. On each side facade, two tiers of windows and ornamental buttressing are complemented by triangular dormer windows above. Pointed-arch, stained-glass windows on front and sides show floral-inspired geometric patterns. There is brick relief-work ornamentation in the peak of the front gable, and gable edges and roof ridges are decorated in copper trim.

The former 60' steeple was removed in 1958 due to damage from several lightning strikes; the tower currently ends in a flattened hip and a large mounted cross.

Inside, as in many of the older Altoona churches, the sanctuary is on the second floor. An elaborate wood ceiling has grouped stickwork panels separated by heavy beams and visually joined to the side walls by carved brackets. An elaborately carved lectern in the shape of a life-sized angel and a Gothic tracery pulpit are also of note.

History: St. James is one of the historically German churches to remain active in the Fourth Ward neighborhood. The second Lutheran church in Altoona, started in 1860 and officially organized in 1861, St. James was formed to provide German-language services to families on the city's East Side. Two detailed histories of the church are available, published respectively for the seventy-fifth and 100th anniversaries of its formation. In the first of these, printed in 1936, an English text parallels the German version; by 1961, English is used exclusively.



Fig. 5.80 St. James German Evangelical Lutheran Church, 1401-05 8th Ave., interior, main sanctuary.

The first church building, a frame structure, was dedicated in 1862 and rebuilt in 1873. By 1883 the church had 140 member families for a total of 475. At this time, alternating English- and German-language services were held. The new brick structure was begun in 1889, built in response to the continual growth of the congregation. The contractor was Anton Meyer of Hollidaysburg, who may also have functioned as architect. Dedication services were held September 14, 1890. By 1895 there were 600 members, and the church was reported to have a seating capacity of 750. German services were discontinued in January 1956.

St. James has sponsored a parochial school at various times, as well as several auxiliary societies and choirs. A current group called the Jolly St. Jamers, composed of older congregation members, continues



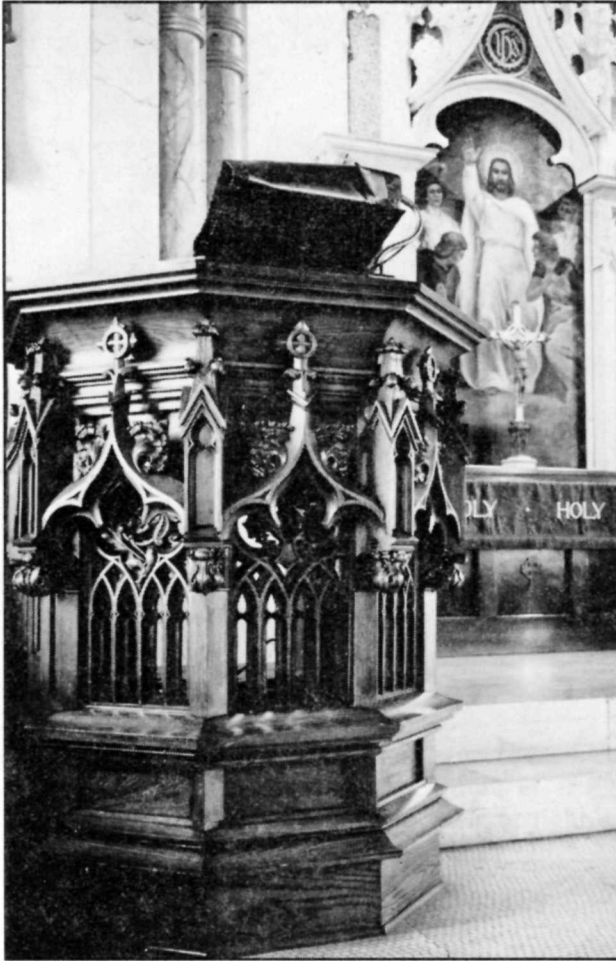


Fig. 5.81 St. James German Evangelical Lutheran Church, 1401-05 8th Ave., interior, pulpit and altar.

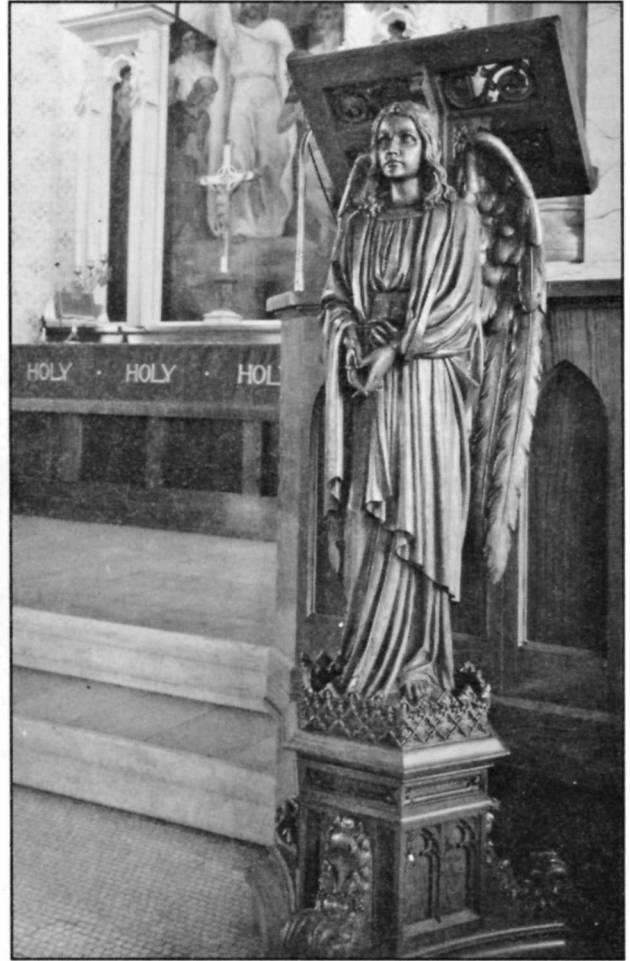


Fig. 5.82 St. James German Evangelical Lutheran Church, 1401-05 8th Ave., interior, lectern and altar.

ties to Altoona's German heritage. In 1981, St. James's congregation made the news when it donated the church's old pipe organ to Trinity Lutheran Church at Whitehouse in Canada's Yukon Territory.

Sources: Maps: 1882, 1888, 1894, 1909. Africa, 171-175. *Illustrated Altoona*, 85. "75th Anniversary of St. James Evangelical Lutheran Church, 1861-1936." "100th Anniversary of St. James Evangelical Lutheran Church, 1891-1961." *Altoona Mirror* (July 1, 1958; August 18, 1973; and September 1, 1981). *Altoona Tribune* (January 15, 1916).

Theodore and Mary Wigton House  
211-213 12th St.

Built by 1887

Description: This large, two-and-one-half-story, double house is clad in novelty wood siding. The facade and roof line suggest two front-gabled ells joined at the section that projects toward the street. The central projecting section has a hipped roof with a front gable. Small dentils and brackets support the cornice molding. The cornice returns have been enclosed.

History: It has been difficult to determine a construction date for this structure, but it appears to have

been built between 1887 and 1891. It is likely that there was an earlier house on this lot, or perhaps some portion of the current house. If that is the case, it could explain the unusual design.

Joseph B. Downing, a clerk, purchased this lot from John Wright for \$400 in 1870. For such a sum, a dwelling must surely have been part of the purchase. This was an investment property for Downing who maintained a house and lot elsewhere in the Fourth Ward from 1871 to 1883.



Fig. 5.83 Theodore and Mary Wigton House, 211-13 12th St., looking west.



Fig. 5.84 Theodore and Mary Wigton House, 211-13 12th St., 12th Street facade.

He sold the property at 3rd Avenue and 12th Street to Theodore H. Wigton in May 1873. The value for tax purposes was listed as \$650 that year. Wigton, then a cashier at Altoona Bank, apparently also bought the property for investment purposes.

Theodore and Mary Wigton sold the property in 1874 to G. Lewis Myers. Myers was also a clerk at Altoona Bank. Myers immediately deeded the property back to Mary Wigton. The

Wigtons continued to own the property until 1887 when they sold it to William T. McConnell for \$2,500.

McConnell, a machinist, lived around the corner at 1201 3rd Ave. He continued to maintain both properties. In 1891, a double house is listed for the first time at the 12th Street address. It was valued at \$1,700. The McConnells' doubled their investment in only four years when they sold the property to Dr. E. E. Ball, a dentist, for \$5,750. Dr. Ball immediately deeded the property to Annie McConnell, wife of William. The McConnells continued to own the property with brief periods of temporarily transferring it out of their hands until they finally sold the half known as No. 213 to William and Mary Maines for \$3,400 in 1923. Frank and Mary Singer purchased the other half of the double house, 211, from the McConnells also on September 28, 1923 for \$3,400. Frank was a brakeman for the railroad.

William and Mary Maines purchased No. 211 from the Singers in 1928 for \$1. That purchase returned the entire lot and house to single-family ownership.

Sources: Maps: 1882, 1888, 1894. City directories. Tax assessment records. Deed books: Z/68, 30/41, 32/104-106/ 62/570, 89/18-20, 194/321, 301/540-542, 311/450, 313/92, 372/559. ns.

Charles R. and Lettie L. Bell House  
200 13th St.

Built 1900

Builders: Bunker & Fleck

Description: The Bell House is the most intact of three apparently identical houses built on the north side of 13th Street by the developers Bunker & Fleck. The two-and-a-half-story, two-bay frame house has an asymmetrically placed cross gable at right extending square from the side-gable eave over a two-story hexagonal bay window. A one-story porch has a half-width gable placed in opposition at the left side of the house over the entrance door.

Ornamental woodwork provides textured contrast to the horizontal novelty wood siding. Sets of paired brackets are spaced below the flat surface of the eaves and additional brackets meet at pendants below the projecting gable edge. The gable window splits a half-round stick-work medallion; the front gables of the roof and porch, as well as the front porch wall, are sided in hexagonal shingles. Additional pressed-work decoration is also used in both front gables.

The concrete block porch foundation is old enough to sport a coal-chute door. A small projecting addition has been made to the left side of the structure.

History: Developers in the Fourth Ward built modestly, providing small groups of working-class houses as infill between existing structures. The property at this address, like 1222\* and 1224\* 2nd Ave., was part of a larger purchase made by John Thompson, a conductor, from John and Emma Wright in August 1872.

James P. and Jean H. Graham sold the lot to B. Bunker and J. S. Fleck, "trading as Bunker and Fleck," for \$2,250 on May 9, 1900. Benjamin Bunker and James S. Fleck listed themselves as "Contractors and Builders and Lumber Dealers, 410-420 7th Ave." Only six weeks after the purchase, Bunker & Fleck had sold the current 39' x 50' lot, a third of the property, with its new house, to Charles R. Bell for \$2,200. Amos C. Davis, Jr., purchased the house next door on the same day for \$2,280; George A. Klesius's house at the alley's edge went for \$1,600.

In the 1900 directory, machinist Charles R. Bell is the only new owner to be living on site. Amos C. Davis, a foreman, was not yet a resident in his new house. George A. Klesius, working in the roofing

and general jobbing business, never lived here.<sup>39</sup>

Title to the house was transferred among various members of the Bell family until quite recently. Charles R. Bell and his wife, Lettie J., were living here in 1945, along with Esther L. Bell who worked as a teller at the First National Bank. Charles Bell died in January 1949, and Esther Bell sold the house to the current owner in March 1986.

Sources: Maps: 1894, 1909 (1888 and 1894 maps were not available for this address). Deed books:

28/218, 51/155, 127/276, 127/432, 127/418, 127/490, 1126/366. City directories. Tax assessment records.



Fig. 5.85 Charles R. and Lettie L. Bell House, 200 13th St., with two neighboring houses of the same form.

### Phillip Kimmel House

104-06 14th St.

Built 1894-95

**Description:** Constructed of solid brick rather than the more common brick veneer, this side-gable double house is arranged as two side-by-side, mirror-image three-bay units. Each has an entrance door by the inner party wall with two windows beside and three above. The wood cornice below projecting eaves is without ornament (returns have been boxed in below the side gables); window surrounds are plain with projecting lower sills. A stoop with steps at each side rises to the entrance door where a small awning is currently installed. Two interior chimneys rising from the roof ridge add to the symmetry. The brick is painted dark gray.

**History:** Like many other street- rather than avenue-facing structures, the Kimmel double house represents modest speculation on the part of Altoona land owners. It is the sole survivor from a set of three identical structures built by Philip Kimmel on a corner lot facing 14th Street. Kimmel purchased the 50' x 120' corner lot from John A. Wright in May 1891 but did not develop it for several years. A tinner by trade, Kimmel first built a different set of double brick houses at 101-03 and 105-07 14th St.

<sup>39</sup> As discussed in the Fourth Ward chapter, Klesius was engaged in a contractor-based barter system in which his sheet-metal and various other types of work were exchanged with builders for an interest in completed structures. This may explain the lower price he paid for his house.

in 1892. His 1895 tax assessment shows a dramatic increase in the number of properties owned, including the houses at 102 through 106 14th St., and another set of three double houses at 305, 307, 307-1/2 14th St. In 1896, Kimmel had a tinning and roofing business at 609 14th St. and a home at 1411 4th Ave., both in the Fourth Ward neighborhood.

Helen McNeely of Philadelphia acquired this and other lots at a sheriff's sale of Kimmel's property in 1897. William H. Staake, an attorney, acquired many of her holdings in June of that year. The 50' x 120' lot with three double houses was sold to Minnie Dora Segel for \$4,800 in February 1901. Thomas Weir, who had a hardware and real estate business on 4th Avenue, acquired the property in November 1902. When sold at sheriff's sale to V. A. Oswald in 1916, the property was described as "having thereon erected three



Fig. 5.86 Phillip Kimmel House, 104-06 14th St.

two-story double brick dwelling houses with all modern improvements and necessary outbuildings."

Venantius A. Oswald, proprietor of the American Brewery and a resident with wife Annie on prestigious Broad Avenue, sold this single house on a 38' x 50' lot to Herman G. and Laura P. Miller in June 1923. (Other properties went to John F. and Lillie M. Dorman in 1933 and to the county commissioners for delinquent taxes in 1955.) Herman Miller was pastor at the Brethren in Christ Church and lived to the north of the Fourth Ward. The Millers sold the house to laborer Lesin R. and Rosa T. Oldham in June 1939, who transferred the title to Clifton W. Johnson in 1941. Clifton W. and Helen Johnson sold the property to Paul M. and Kathryn L. Clark for \$2,200 in May 1974; they kept it until 1977. In 1975, she was a clerk at Revco Inc. and lived outside the city.

The Kimmel House has always been a rental property; information on tenants is available from city directories starting in 1939. In that year Russell D. Clapper lived at No. 104; no occupation is listed. John Mittermeir lived at No. 106 with his wife, Rose; and he worked as a warper for the Schwartzenbach-Huber silk mill.

Sources: Maps: 1882, 1894. Deed books: 86/314, 116/134, 116/134, 129/676, 155/242, 240/244, 308/614, 308/416, 958/575, 446/669, 462/7, 960/1182, 1007/752. City directories. Tax assessment records.



Xavier (Frank X.)  
Putz House  
208 14th St.

Built 1891

Description: This small, two-and-one-half-story house presents a side-gable facade to the street but has its entrance in the wider gable end. Located at the alley on the rear of a corner property, it is oriented toward the larger house at the avenue front. The presence of a narrow, closed-in window on the right edge of the street face suggests that the entrance may have been moved.



Fig. 5.87 Xavier (Frank X.) Putz House, 208 14th St., and customized taxi.

The shape of this house is unusual, as the first floor is slightly wider than the second. This extra space is topped by a short pented roof that runs along the entrance facade, wrapping around to the street side for part of that expanse. Wide aluminum siding and matching striped awnings obscure original window patterns. Sliding picture windows have been added in the first floor; there are two windows in the front and three in the side at second-floor level. The house has a central enclosed chimney.

History: The Putz House is an example of a number of Fourth Ward buildings converted over their history to serve different functions. When Michael M. Kimmel purchased a 50' x 120' lot on the corner of 2nd Avenue from John A. Wright in May 1889 it cost only \$900. When Xavier Putz purchased the lot in July of the following year, a house was located at the avenue front and the price rose to \$2,775. In 1900 Francis X. Putz ran a meat market at 1808 4th Ave. and at this address, listing 1808 4th Ave. as his home. When Mary Ludwig purchased the property in July 1902, shortly after Putz's death, it was described as containing "a two story frame dwelling house on the corner of 2nd Avenue and Fourteenth street and also a single story frame house on the corner of the alley used as a butcher shop."

George Pielmeier acquired the property in January 1905, adding his wife Cricentia to the deed in 1922. Sanborn maps and the 1902 deed of sale contradict each other as to whether this was originally a one- or two-story structure. It was Pielmeier who converted the house, perhaps adding the second floor, if it was not already present as maps indicate. His first tax assessment for the property in 1906 reads "and shop in rear." Pielmeier's 1907 taxes, however, are for a house at 1330 2nd Ave. and another at 208 14th St. George Pielmeier, a blacksmith for the PRR, and Crissie Pielmeier lived at 1330 2nd Ave. through 1925, but moved into the alley house by 1930.

As a widower in April 1947, Pielmeier split the property and transferred the 25' x 47' lot, 208 14th St., to Herman Lang, a foreman, and his wife Anna Marie; and he sold 1330 2nd Ave. to other relatives.

The Langs lived here in 1948, but sold the property to Charles R. and Gertrude T. Plummer in 1955 for \$4,500. Gertrude died in 1966; in 1967 Charles had remarried to Grace A. Plummer. He continued to live here during his retirement from his job as a machinist for the PRR. Grace Plummer transferred the property to their children in 1987.

Sources: Maps: 1882, 1894, 1909. Deed books: 74/399, 81/255, 137/196, 155/272, 560/559, 712/512, 862/470, 1143/966. City directories. Tax assessment records.



Fig. 5.88 Ludwig and Frances Leix House II, 210-12 14th St.

Ludwig and Frances  
Leix House II  
210-12 14th St.

Built 1903

Description: Built at the back of a corner lot facing the street rather than avenue front, the Leix double house is typical, both in situation and in type, of most Fourth Ward double houses--similar, in fact, to many found throughout Altoona.

This two-and-one-half-story, cross-gable frame house is arranged as two reversed units sharing a party wall.

The two-bay units

are clearly distinct, each having an entrance door toward the party wall paired with a tripled parlor window with fan transom. A shared front porch with side entrances has four evenly spaced columnar supports and a stone foundation. Overall visual unity is maintained through the shared cross gable with its central paired window, the small gable centered in the front porch roof, and by the symmetrically placed, enclosed chimneys, one for each unit. The house is currently covered with (replacement) horizontal wood siding, and there are lattice shutters on the second-floor front windows.

History: This property--part of the same original parcel as 1329 3rd Ave.\*--was purchased by Ludwig Leix, a blacksmith, from John A. Wright in 1876. The Leix family house was built almost immediately, in 1876-77, on the front section of the lot facing 3rd Avenue. The rear of the lot remained empty until 1903 when Leix was taxed for a half-lot and house at 1329 3rd Ave. as well as a half-lot and double house, valued at \$2,000, with an address of 208 and 210 14th St.

Because this was always a rental property, it is hard to identify early inhabitants. In 1939, Howard, Florence E., and Frances Ayres lived at No. 210. Howard worked as a fireman. William H. Gross, a janitor, lived at No. 212 with his wife, Sarah D., and Anna S. Gross, a widow.

Leix's children transferred the property to Sarah Gross in August 1941. In that year the Ayres had

moved and were replaced by Carl J. Glasshauser who had no listed occupation. Sarah Gross died in 1958 and widower William H. sold it to the current owner for \$2,250 in 1962.

Sources: Maps: 1894, 1909. Deed books: 35/192, 469/177, 800/543. City directories. Tax assessment records.



Fig. 5.89 Angus and Sarah L. Walton House, 117 15th St.

Angus and Sarah L.  
Walton House  
117 15th St.

Built 1890

Description: Built on a small urban lot, the Walton House, with its frame construction and mansard roof, is clearly gesturing toward a style originally intended for more elaborate and substantial houses. Mansard elaboration appears only on the front facade, creating the overall effect of a side-gambrel roof structure. The house is of frame construction rather than the brick or

stone more usual for this style. Three stories high and three bays wide (with two pedimented dormer windows in the third floor), the house has its original horizontal wood siding and patterned hexagonal and square shingles on the third floor mansard front. Sawtooth applique runs between the single brackets of the cornice and lower curb, which set off each edge of the pedimented window surrounds below.

The right-hand window on the second floor front has been replaced and shortened. Unpainted plywood and latticework have recently been used to fill in the porch on the first floor. There is a central enclosed chimney.

History: Although there are several of these frame, mansard-roofed houses along this section of 15th Street, their potentially common origin has so far remained undetermined. Similar houses are also found in other parts of Altoona (see First Ward).

Angus Walton, a machinist, purchased a 25' x 100' lot facing 15th Street from John and Emma Wright in May 1889. Walton was first taxed in 1890 for a half lot and house worth \$1,000 at 109 15th St. The address was corrected to 115 15th St. in 1892--this was likewise the number assigned the current Walton house on the 1894 Sanborn map. Walton is listed in directories at 115 17th St. during the span of his ownership.

When the house was sold to John B. Westley in April 1895, the price had risen to \$2,000. Westley, variously working in dry goods and as a farmer, did not reside here either, but lived at 971 7th Ave. By his will of 1900 the property was transferred to Mary Otto, who likewise lived elsewhere. She sold the lot with its two-story frame dwelling to Harry H. Hogemyer for \$1,800 in May 1913.

Harry H. and Mary Hogemyer did live in the house; in 1925 his occupation was listed as chief clerk. William Hayes and Glennavee Esther Palmer purchased the house from them in August 1943. While he lived here, William Palmer owned and ran Palmer's Garage. He died in 1969, and in 1973 his widow sold the property to Thomas L. and Phyllis A. Harkless. They lived here while Thomas worked as an administrative aide for the Altoona Housing Authority. In May 1978 the property was acquired by Norma A. McCaulley who kept it until 1986.

Sources: Maps: 1888, 1894. Deed books: 76/53, 105/528, 219/22, 479/7, 948/710, 1013/752, 1151/928. City directories. Tax assessment records.

John and Emma  
Wright House I  
205 15th St.

Built 1884

Description: This three-bay, side-gable frame house is most remarkable for the survival of its extensive Victorian wood trim. The two-and-one-half-story structure has horizontal novelty wood siding. Six pairs of scrolled and incised brackets are spaced along the cornice and side gable returns. The curved recesses above the arched pediments of second-floor window surrounds are decorated with incising and medallions. The window surrounds have elaborate cutwork scrolls at top and bottom and rest on a projecting sill. Pediments rise to a straight projecting molding with a central keystone. Two similar first-floor windows sit next to the front left entry.



Fig. 5.90 John and Emma Wright House I, 205 15th St.

The window surrounds have elaborate cutwork scrolls at top and bottom and rest on a projecting sill. Pediments rise to a straight projecting molding with a central keystone. Two similar first-floor windows sit next to the front left entry.

Also surviving is the original side-entry front porch consisting of four spindle-turned supports with spindled banister. The porch is joined with cutwork brackets to a projecting roof, which has a mansard-like ogee curve.

An exterior chimney rises on the left wall of the house just past the ridge line. The plan of the interior has been altered.



History: This house has survived in remarkable condition considering the number of times it has changed hands. Like the building now at 1506 2nd Ave.\*, this house sits on a lot originally laid out to face the street rather than avenue front. Both are unusual because they were built on land still owned by John Wright--they first appear in his tax assessment for 1884.

John Hart officially purchased a 30' x 100' lot and house on 15th Street from the executors of John Wright for \$1,500 in 1897. Hart, a molder, had taken up residence by 1888. Tax assessments seem to have been lagging as Hart was not taxed for property that year. In 1889, however, he was taxed for a half-lot and house worth \$1,000 with the address 205 15th St.

Hart sold the property to Calvin A. Feight in July 1906. Calvin and his wife, Maggie Blackburn Feight, sold it to Daniel T. and Jessie Pennington in January 1911. By 1912 Hart had moved to South Altoona and Pennington, a machinist, resided here.

The Penningtons sold the house to Samuel B. and Irene M. Bowser for \$4,700 in April 1924. Two years later the Bowsers sold it to Leo P. and Mildred C. Bettwy who lived here while he worked as an electrician. In 1937 the Berks County Trust Company assumed the Bowser mortgage and sold the property to minors Concetta and Pauline Gugliotta. Achille Diodata, a laborer for the PRR, was listed as head of the household here in 1939. Title was vested in Santa and Achille Diodata by September 1943. The Diodata and Gugliotta conglomerate sold the house to Joseph and Anna R. Fiore in November 1965. The current owners purchased the house in 1976 and have remodelled the interior.

Sources: Maps: 1882, 1894. Deed books: 116/313, 167/606, 200/256, 318/396, 437/586, 479/357, 841/110, 992/204. City directories. Tax assessment records. Interview with owner.

Peter Pielmeier  
Blacksmith Shop  
(Beahm's Garage)  
208 16th St.

Built 1906-07

Description: This small one- and two-story commercial structure was a blacksmith and wagon shop.

The Pielmeier Shop, now a two-story garage, is situated on the alley behind 2nd Avenue, and is constructed in frame, brick, and concrete block. Close examination of its irregular form suggests that the building originally



Fig. 5.91 Peter Pielmeier Blacksmith Shop, 208 16th St.



had a gable-front, two-story section with a one-story shed extension to the east. This shed area has been greatly augmented with flat-roofed, one-story brick additions on the street facade and east side, which extend the first-floor interior well beyond the two-story walls.

The sliding garage door on the street front hangs from a track that runs below the roof eave. Above the first floor the shop is still clad with horizontal wood siding. Other sections are sided in brick and asphalt shingle.

According to property records, the two-story brick, concrete block, and frame section at left is 20' x 50'. The one-story addition at right is 18' x 50', is built of brick and block, and dates from 1986.

History: This structure has made a successful and not unsurprising transition from neighborhood blacksmith's shop to neighborhood garage.

Peter Pielmeier, who built the shop, purchased land directly from John Wright's heirs in 1905. In total he acquired one half and one full lot, 91' x 120', building not only the shop but houses on 2nd Avenue. A late addition to 1906 tax-assessment records shows Pielmeier with a 91' x 73-1/2' lot with the amendment "started to build wall up." In 1907 he is taxed for a lot plus house and smith shop valued at \$2,500. In that year's city directory, Pielmeier is listed as a blacksmith at this address, living at 1532 2nd Ave., the house on the front of the property. Teresia C. Pielmeier lived there as well. In 1925, both Louis and Peter Pielmeier were blacksmiths at this address; living at the house were Louis, Otto, Peter and his wife, Anna, and Teresia.

Pielmeier passed the property to Louis and Teresia in 1928. Despite these changes in ownership within the family, he was still a practicing blacksmith at this address as late as 1945, one of three still working in Altoona.

Teresia Pielmeier sold the entire lot with house and shop to Joseph A. and Julia Paolucci, husband and wife, for \$7,000 in November 1951. By 1953, Ken Howard's Garage occupied the building; in 1955 the building was occupied by Hartman & Wolf Auto Repairs, formerly at an address on 9th Avenue. Robert P. and H. Louis Beahm acquired the property in February 1957. Beahm's Garage first appeared at this address in 1957; the Beahms occupied the brick house at the property's front.

Sources: Maps: 1894, 1909. Deed books: 732/538, 650/399, 425/445, 375/635, 375/637, 375/633, 160/211. Tax assessment records. City directories.



LLYSWEN

by Kathy Edwards

*This is intended to be the aristocratic suburb, and lots are sold with some restrictions as to buildings and use. A number of fine cottages have already been erected there and a fine station and waiting room by the Logan Valley [Electric Railway] people whose cars pass in either direction every fifteen minutes.<sup>1</sup>*

Llyswen today is a middle- and upper-middle class suburb of roughly 200 acres near the southernmost edge of Altoona, two and a half miles from the central, intown post office. Logan Boulevard, one of Altoona's busiest thoroughfares, bisects the length of the suburb from northwest to southeast. The boulevard intersects at Llyswen's south end with the old Hollidaysburg Pike, still called Plank Road. Both Logan Boulevard and Plank Road are major traffic channels between the city and the thick of strip-and-cluster commercial development surrounding Logan Valley Mall just south of the city limits. Both roads have also historically been the main routes between Altoona and the Blair County seat at Hollidaysburg.<sup>2</sup> Llyswen's eastern and western neighbors are residential areas, but its eastern boundary is Union Avenue, a more modestly developed commercial drag that feeds into Pleasant Valley Boulevard at the Pleasant Valley Shopping



Fig. 6.2 Michael and Louis Beezer "Cottages" along the south side of Logan Boulevard.

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<sup>1</sup>Charles B. Clark, Illustrated Altoona (Privately printed: Altoona, 1896), 9.

<sup>2</sup>Whether the Rte. 220 Bypass has effectively lessened the importance of Logan Boulevard and Plank Road to either of the functions cited here is arguable. Rte. 220 does not yet consistently carry as much traffic as either of these roads.

Center, across the street from Llyswen's eastern section.

As much because of its position in this heavily trafficked area as because of its own distinctive visual character, Llyswen's most public aspect--the impressive row of large, individualistic homes lining Logan Boulevard (Fig. 6.2), uniformly set back on generous lots from the tree-shaded sidewalks--is a familiar landmark to a great many Altoonans, who popularly identify the name Llyswen with a highly desirable, if antique, brand of genteel suburban comfort and solidity. The roots of this identification lie in the past, in associations bound up with the social status of the men who founded it, the images and rhetoric with which they promoted it, and the cultural currency of certain architectural forms that became its signature. But the modern version of Llyswen's idealized image is continually reinforced by the stark juxtaposition of old and new formal values in the press of commercial development upon the suburb's boundaries, a contrast made even sharper by the fact that nearly all the neighborhood's original fabric survives, even from the first flush of building in 1895.

Llyswen was founded in 1894 by the Altoona Suburban Home Company on a 100-acre tract of the former Elias Baker estate. Company president John Lloyd, Sr., purchased the land from the Baker heirs in 1893 as part of a private transaction that included a smaller tract in South Altoona and ninety-five acres one mile farther south on (then) Logan Avenue, identified in the deed as Lakemont Park.<sup>3</sup> Lloyd was also president of the Altoona & Logan Valley Electric Railway, which developed Lakemont Park as a resort in 1893 to attract riders to the Altoona-Hollidaysburg route, inaugurated the following year as the first major extension of trolley service beyond the city limits. In conjunction with this expansion of commuter services and as part of a broad yet tightly integrated development scheme, Llyswen began as Altoona's first streetcar suburb, flanking the double tracks down Logan Avenue to Lakemont Park and Hollidaysburg, a haven from the noise and soot of the city railyards yet only ten minutes and a nickel fare from downtown.

### **Project Area and Rationale**

The Altoona Suburban Home Company developed Llyswen in three stages, plotting one section at a time and effectively treating each section as a separate enterprise. The company had acquired the land from Lloyd in three separate transactions.<sup>4</sup> Section I, originally laid out in 1895 and revised in 1906, is today bounded by Ward Avenue on the north, Logan Boulevard on the east, Ruskin Drive and Morningside Avenue on the west, and Plank Road on the south. Section II was plotted in 1905 and is bounded by East Plank Road, Frankstown Avenue, Logan Boulevard, and Bellview and Eveningtide avenues. Section III, on the east side of Logan Boulevard opposite Section I, stretches from Ward Avenue south to East Plank Road, and from Logan Boulevard east to Union Avenue, excluding Llyswen Court off of Union and the eastern corner of the tract, defined by Mill Run and Emerson Avenue. Its plan was surveyed in 1907 and revised in 1920.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>Deed book 99/523.

<sup>4</sup>Section I, 104/167; Section II, 108/204; Section III, 190/552.

<sup>5</sup>Plot books 1/21; 2/65; 2/113; 2/129; 4/27.

The project area for this survey was that portion of Section I lying north of Mill Run (Fig. 6.1). Comprised of roughly fifty acres, the site is divided by a flexible grid of avenues that maximizes the building potential of the varied topography, from Mill Run's level flood plain up the steep east face of the South Altoona hill to Ruskin Drive. Original lots averaged one-third of an acre; a number of these have since been subdivided. The area includes 183 homes and two churches built between 1895 and 1978. Baker Elementary School was constructed in 1907 just north of the project area on Ward Avenue at Coleridge Avenue.

Within the city limits, Llyswen is exceptional for the generous size of its individual lots and unique--in a city of rigid grids--for its relaxed and picturesque street layout. Beyond the straightaways of Logan Boulevard and Coleridge Avenue, Llyswen's avenues take graceful advantage of the rolling site. They also bear the names of poets and writers, a mark of conspicuous refinement in a railroad town whose streets were more commonly numbered, or named for trees, presidents, or local figures. This portion of Llyswen is the closest thing Altoona has to a garden suburb in the Romantic tradition, a form that dominated planning schemes for upper-class residential areas from the third quarter of the nineteenth century until its popularity was superseded by City Beautiful-inspired formality at the turn of the century. The very name "Llyswen" conveys a lyricism that is evocatively, if not precisely, Welsh. The Lloyd family was probably responsible for the name choice, but the association with Wales was also in keeping with a Pennsylvania tradition of place names both borrowed (like "Berwyn") and invented (like "Bryn Mawr") intended to invoke "Welshness" as a kind of rustic-yet-civilized pastoral ideal. Similarities in the physical landscape and the common industry of coal mining may have influenced the comparison. The state also had a significant history of Welsh immigration and settlement.<sup>6</sup>

But Llyswen is part of the Altoona neighborhoods project as much for its representativeness as for its exceptional features. While Sections II and III developed more homogeneously, thanks to closer company oversight, deed restrictions in Section I were minimal, pertaining more to the siting of a house on its lot than to physical aspects of the house itself.<sup>7</sup> The result was a wider variation in forms and features. Section I was also the least "successful" of the three, in that lots sold more slowly, and many, held by small investors, were not built upon even sixty years after their initial sale. The project area therefore encapsulates the range of formal, material, and stylistic options available to independent local homebuilders over a period of nearly eighty-five years. It serves the present study as a convenient, compact overview of the evolution of fashion in domestic architecture for the middle and professional social strata in this part of the United States from the 1890s to the 1970s. The varied fabric of the project area also reflects the course of Altoona's fluctuating economic fortunes, until the mid-1950s so closely tied to the business of the Pennsylvania Railroad.

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<sup>6</sup>As late as 1920, census takers counted 21,167 Welsh foreign-born residents of Pennsylvania. John Bodnar, An Ethnic Profile of Pennsylvania's Population (1973).

<sup>7</sup>The standard agreement was that "no building whatsoever will be erected within 25 feet of street lines and not more than one dwelling or other building, other than a stable, carriage house or outbuilding, shall be erected on any one lot for 15 years from date hereof." We will examine the implications of these restrictions later.



The strongest argument for Llyswen's inclusion in this project, however, is the light its history sheds on the shape, character, and depth of the Altoona-PRR connection. John Lloyd, Sr., president of both the Altoona Suburban Home Company and the Altoona & Logan Valley Electric Railway, also presided over the First National Bank, the city's largest financial institution; the Altoona Manufacturing Company, which produced world-class steam engines; and a handful of fuel and utility companies. Although he functioned as a local businessman, several of his enterprises were dependent upon strong financial ties to the PRR. He was even, for a time, a partner in the Philadelphia banking firm of A. J. Cassatt & Company; Cassatt was a superintendent of motive power in Altoona who went on to become president of the PRR. Lloyd's venture into residential development at Llyswen reveals a great deal about the internal structures of power, patronage, and finance among the inner circle of Altoona's elite, and is particularly revealing of the subtle nature and extent of the PRR's influence upon the city's formal development. From this vantage point, the history of Llyswen may help illuminate just where and how status boundaries were drawn in the boom-cum-bust social geography of a one-industry, "one-class" town.

### **Patterns and Mechanics of Suburb Expansion**

Several conditions spurred suburbanization in Altoona at the end of the nineteenth century. By the early 1880s, thanks to a booming economy and the housing needs of the expanding PRR labor force, Altoona's intown wards were built nearly to capacity. A zone of industrial and wholesale establishments dependent upon access to the tracks had developed along the length of the PRR corridor; adjacent to this zone were the commercial districts: 10th Avenue to Chestnut Avenue on the west side, and 7th to 9th avenues east of the tracks. This emerging configuration transformed the earlier pattern of close-in residential areas. As activity in both the city and the shops increased, residential building sites away from the bustle and the soot became more attractive, particularly to prosperous merchants, professionals, PRR management, and skilled technicians eager to distance themselves from the labor and service class. Increasing property values along the commercial/industrial corridor were a pragmatic boost to the trend. Given the topography of the narrow valley, the two most obvious directions to move were uphill--east or west--or south, to the flat terrain drained by Mill Run. Land to the south had the added advantage of being upwind from the shops.

The introduction of streetcar service in 1882 encouraged development away from the city center. The City Passenger Railway Company, incorporated on March 10, 1882, inaugurated horse-drawn streetcar service on July 4. The original route was a three-and-a-half-mile loop along 17th Street, 11th Avenue, 11th Street and 8th Avenue; it soon expanded south along 7th Avenue to 25th Street. Concurrent with the expansion of the PRR locomotive shops into Juniata in 1889-90, track was extended down Chestnut Avenue to that borough; more track was also laid on the east side, from 8th Avenue to 6th Avenue and north to Lloyd Street, one block past 1st Street. Another line extended south along 11th Avenue to 18th Street, then along Union Avenue under the tracks to Broad Avenue all the way to the city line at 27th Street, traversing a large, level tract between the main line and the Hollidaysburg branch line.<sup>8</sup> With streetcar access, Broad Avenue became a sought-after residential address. Side streets off

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<sup>8</sup>Clark, 24.

of it also took on an increasingly gentrified character.

The City Passenger Railway electrified its service in 1891; the same year, a new company, the City & Park Railway, received permission to build into the city from the south. Sylvester C. Baker presided over the City & Park, which began as an electrified system of seven-and-a-half miles of track between the city and an amusement park proposed by the railway company at Lakemont. Competition between the two lines was short-lived; in 1892 the City Passenger Railway bought the City & Park, and on April 17, 1893, the Altoona & Logan Valley Electric Railway, a company chartered just four months earlier, acquired both companies through a stock purchase. The takeover occurred four days after the PRR board of directors authorized the purchase of 40 percent of the capital stock and first mortgage bonds of the Altoona & Logan Valley from streetcar company president John Lloyd, Sr., for \$100,000. The network of capital that controlled city transportation, however, remained very tight: Lloyd had earlier been instrumental in the founding of the City Passenger Railway, and Sylvester Baker, representing the Baker estate, retained a large block of Altoona & Logan Valley stock.<sup>9</sup>

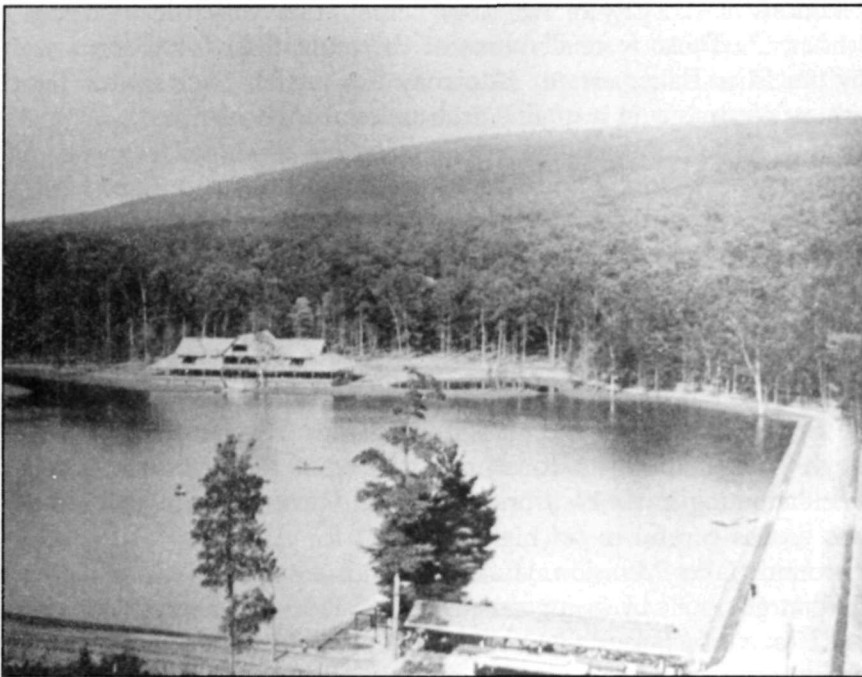


Fig. 6.3 The streetcar station and casino at Lakemont Park, *Art Work of Blair County* (1893).

In 1893, Lakemont Park belonged not to the City & Park but to the Baker estate. Lloyd acquired it on November 27 of that year along with Llyswen Section I, in the transaction already cited. He then transferred ownership of the park along with the responsibility of its development to the new railway company. The Altoona & Logan Valley immediately set about laying track beyond the park to Hollidaysburg, and more track north through Juniata to the town of Bellwood. By the time the first cars ran to the county

seat in early 1894, Lakemont Park was completed; the old City & Park main line between the park and the city was double-tracked to accommodate the crowds attracted by the new artificial lake, carousel, casino, and bandstand (Fig. 6.3); and the Altoona Suburban Home Company had broken ground for the Llyswen trolley station at Whittier Avenue on the Logan Avenue run to Lakemont Park.

<sup>9</sup>Benson W. Rohrbeck, *Altoona's Trolleys* (privately published: 1980). Kenneth C. Springirth, *Viewing Pennsylvania's Trolleys* (privately published: 1971), 88. Lloyd obituary, *Altoona Mirror* (May 9, 1921), 1, 13.

Another motivation for suburban growth, evident in the number and variety of development schemes in Altoona at the turn of the century, was profit. Trade in real estate had been the city's "second industry" since the acquisitive intentions of the PRR sent Logan Valley property values skyrocketing in the late 1840s. From that start, the phenomenal growth of Altoona's population and economy made any owner of a sizable piece of property a potential developer, and the PRR had always tacitly depended upon the individual initiative of the speculation builder to house its work force. Profit was an especially powerful incentive to build during the prosperous 1880s and '90s, due to the growing number of merchants, professionals, PRR executives and technicians with incomes more than sufficient to meet their basic needs.

Rapid expansion meant the steady conversion in the marketplace of inexpensive tracts into highly touted subdivisions. In an 1896 overview of the city's attractions, Charles B. Clark described ten Altoona "suburbs," optimistically including under that denomination the sleepy rural community of Collinsville, east of the city. Several advertisements in the same publication, however, indicate a more complex and intense level of residential development, borne out by the number of subdivided properties recorded in county plat books of the period. Sylvester C. Baker promoted lots in seven "additions to the City of Altoona," "exceptionally well located for pleasant and healthful suburban homes." These were divisions of the more than 5,400 acres in and around the city controlled by the Elias Baker estate. Attorney Edward H. Flick touted his modestly picturesque development at Westmont in a quaint, instructional tone obviously addressed to the first-time homebuyer. The photograph accompanying his ad shows an early version of tract housing: in addition to vacant lots, Flick offered pre-built cottages designed by the Beezer Brothers architectural firm. The proliferation of identical picket fences around apparently identical houses indicates the exercise of a substantial degree of design control.<sup>10</sup>

The same level of control but a much more high-style, Beaux Arts architectural character marked Flick's building program on Broad Avenue a few years later. Here, on a number of lots between 24th and 26th streets, he created a neighborhood for himself, again employing the design skills of the Beezer Brothers. Presentation drawings from the architectural firm's catalogs convey Flick's ambition to construct an integrated streetscape of "town houses" for the well-to-do, culminating in his own brick Colonial Revival house at 2528 Broad Ave.<sup>11</sup> Sylvester Baker was just as careful to set high standards for Allegheny Furnace, the neighborhood he developed around Baker Mansion. Baker was not a speculation builder like Flick; instead, he influenced what got built by laying out oversized lots with deed restrictions attached. The various efforts of Flick, Baker, and developers like them helped make manifest class distinctions that were a fundamental part of the city's life, whatever the rhetoric of its public image.

## John Lloyd

John Lloyd, Sr.'s role in Llyswen's development may help elucidate that suburb's place in the construction of this social fabric. Clarke described Llyswen in 1896 as "the aristocratic

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<sup>10</sup>Clark, 7-9, 164.

<sup>11</sup>Michael and Louis Beezer, Beezer Brothers, Architects (Pittsburgh: Eichbaum Press, 1899), 46, 103, 121-22.

suburb." Whether or not Altoona could be said to have an aristocracy, Lloyd was certainly at the center of a small society of men who exerted considerable influence over the city's affairs. His rights to that position were sealed by a family connection to the area dating to the 1830s, when his father, William M. Lloyd, settled near Duncansville. By 1841 William had moved to Hollidaysburg, married, and opened a bank. John was born the following year. When his father and several partners founded the First National Bank of Altoona in 1863, John was named a director. He became cashier in 1867 and president in 1892, at the age of 50.

Lloyd's partnership in A. J. Cassatt's Philadelphia banking firm reinforced the already significant power and prestige of the First National Bank, Altoona's largest, but whether Lloyd was a member of the PRR's inner circle remains unclear. His virtual control over the financing and management of city services and utilities during the 1880s and '90s, however, is undeniable. His bank held the first bonds for the Edison Electric Illuminating Company, as well as the first water and improvement bonded loans for the city once it acquired control over its own water system. At the time of Llyswen's founding in 1894, Lloyd was president of the City Passenger Railway Company; the Altoona and Logan Valley Electric Railway Company; Altoona Gas Company, the city's sole supplier of illuminating gas; Altoona Coal and Coke Company, described in the 1896-97 city directory as "miners, shippers, and wholesale coal and coke manufacturers" at a time when coal was the major home heating fuel; and Allegheny Water Company, an independent utility supplying residential areas south of the city, including Westmont, Allegheny Furnace, and Llyswen.<sup>12</sup>

Lloyd's business interests were intricately tied to those of the Bakers, Altoona's "first family" in terms of property, wealth, and social prestige. Besides their common investment in Lakemont Park and the electric railway system, Sylvester Baker was also Lloyd's partner in Altoona Coal and Coke Company. That the two men would combine their resources to exploit the profit potential of prime residential property seems in retrospect only sound business sense. On July 11, 1893, following a preliminary meeting of "interested parties" at the First National Bank, the Altoona Suburban Home Company was incorporated with a capital stock of \$150,000 [3,000 shares @ \$50]. The largest subscribers were Lloyd, with 1,780 shares, and the estate of Elias Baker, represented by Sylvester, with 1,200 shares.<sup>13</sup>

In 1893 Lloyd paid the Baker estate a total of \$15,615.45 for three tracts of land: 17.2 acres in South Altoona, ninety-five acres known as Lakemont Park, and 100 acres that became Llyswen Section I. At the first stockholders' meeting of the Altoona Suburban Home Company in October 1894, he deeded only the Llyswen acreage to the company for the sum of \$50,000, paid in 800 shares plus \$10,000 to be paid out of profits from the sale of lots.<sup>14</sup> Beyond the implication that the Bakers were, perhaps, land rich but short on ready development capital, this transaction also suggests how necessary Lloyd and the resources he controlled were to their development ambitions. Obviously all parties concerned expected to profit from Llyswen in the

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<sup>12</sup>*Altoona Mirror* (May 9, 1921). The source of the Allegheny Water Company's water supply was three springs located on Sunbrook Farm, Lloyd's summer residence in Duncansville.

<sup>13</sup>Record of Minutes, Altoona Suburban Home Company, June 3, 1898. ASHCo. records are in the collection of the Blair County Historical Society, Baker Mansion.

<sup>14</sup>Deed books 99/523, 104/167. ASHCo minutes, October 30, 1894.



long run, but Lloyd stood to profit handsomely in the short term, with nearly a fourfold return on his investment at the outset.

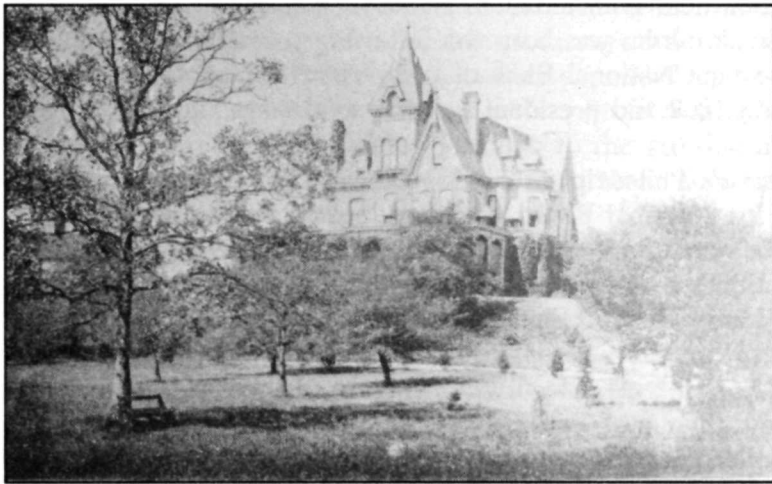


Fig. 6.4 John Lloyd residence at 22nd and Maple avenues, Altoona, Art Work of Blair County (1893).

Still, the nature of Lloyd's interest in a suburban venture at all, and in Llyswen in particular, is less than clear. Certainly profit was a prime motive, but Lloyd was already a wealthy man and very comfortably situated. Sylvester Baker and Edward Flick both lived either in or adjacent to the areas they developed, and thus had a doubly vested interest in the character and success of these places, but Lloyd had no such attachment to Llyswen. In 1895 he and his family lived at Maple Avenue and 22nd Street in an elaborate Victorian mansion

designed for his father by Philadelphia architect Isaac Hobbs and built in 1873 at a cost of \$40,000 (Fig. 6.4). The house was set in an elaborate park encompassing two city blocks between Maple and Broad avenues.<sup>15</sup> In 1896 his new "summer residence," an imposing Colonial Revival mansion designed by the Beezer Brothers in their usual highly ornamented style, was completed at Sunbrook Farm, Lloyd's hillside estate just outside of Duncansville. By 1900 Lloyd had moved out of Altoona altogether, to a grand "town house" in Hollidaysburg also designed by the Beezer Brothers. Together, his two residences represented an upper-class lifestyle divided between the business and social whirl of the city and the "off-season" retreat to private, country property, a lifestyle well beyond what the Altoona Suburban Home Company was constructing for the streetcar suburbanite at Llyswen.

Yet Lloyd took an active long-term interest in the kind of place Llyswen was to be. He was in close charge of the suburb's early years, as a director of the development company from its inception and its president until 1911.<sup>16</sup> In 1904 his son, John, Jr., also became a director, and was appointed company attorney in 1909. More than once in these early years, the Altoona Suburban Home Company's annual stockholders' meeting consisted of the Lloyds and company treasurer C. A. Buch getting together in the senior Lloyd's office at the First National Bank to put an official and perfunctory stamp of approval on all business transacted in the preceding year. Certain details--such as the origin of the name Llyswen, how decisions as to lot size and arrangement were made, determinations as to the nature and extent of landscaping, or who was responsible for naming the streets after literary figures--are not recorded in the

<sup>15</sup>From the caption of a photograph of the house hanging in Baker Mansion, in the collection of the Blair County Historical Society. The house is no longer there. Before his death, Lloyd donated the block along Broad Avenue between 22nd and 23rd streets to the city as a public park. It is now the site of the Jaffa Mosque.

<sup>16</sup>ASHCo. had a board of three directors until 1907, when the number was increased to five.



surviving company documents. However, the scope of John Lloyd, Sr.'s control during Llyswen's formative years assures us that whatever early decisions, if any, were not his, they were at least implemented with his approval.<sup>17</sup>

### Beezer Brothers

If Llyswen's future as Altoona's aristocratic suburb was fixed by Lloyd's initial provisions for a particular physical character, it was sealed by a cooperative arrangement between the Altoona Suburban Home Company and the Beezer Brothers architectural firm to establish models for the suburb's architectural character. The development company first hired Louis and Michael J. Beezer in 1894 to design the Llyswen streetcar station\* on Logan Boulevard at Whittier Avenue (Fig. 6.5). The rustic but recognizably high-style building, finished in local river stone, so charmed streetcar goers that it became an instant landmark. It also proved tremendously photogenic in development company ads urging Altoonans to "Secure an Ideal Home at Llyswen." In payment for their design and for unspecified materials they supplied, the brothers accepted prime adjacent lots on Logan Boulevard one block south of the station. The arrangement was a sweetheart deal: the "Cottages," as the residences they built for themselves

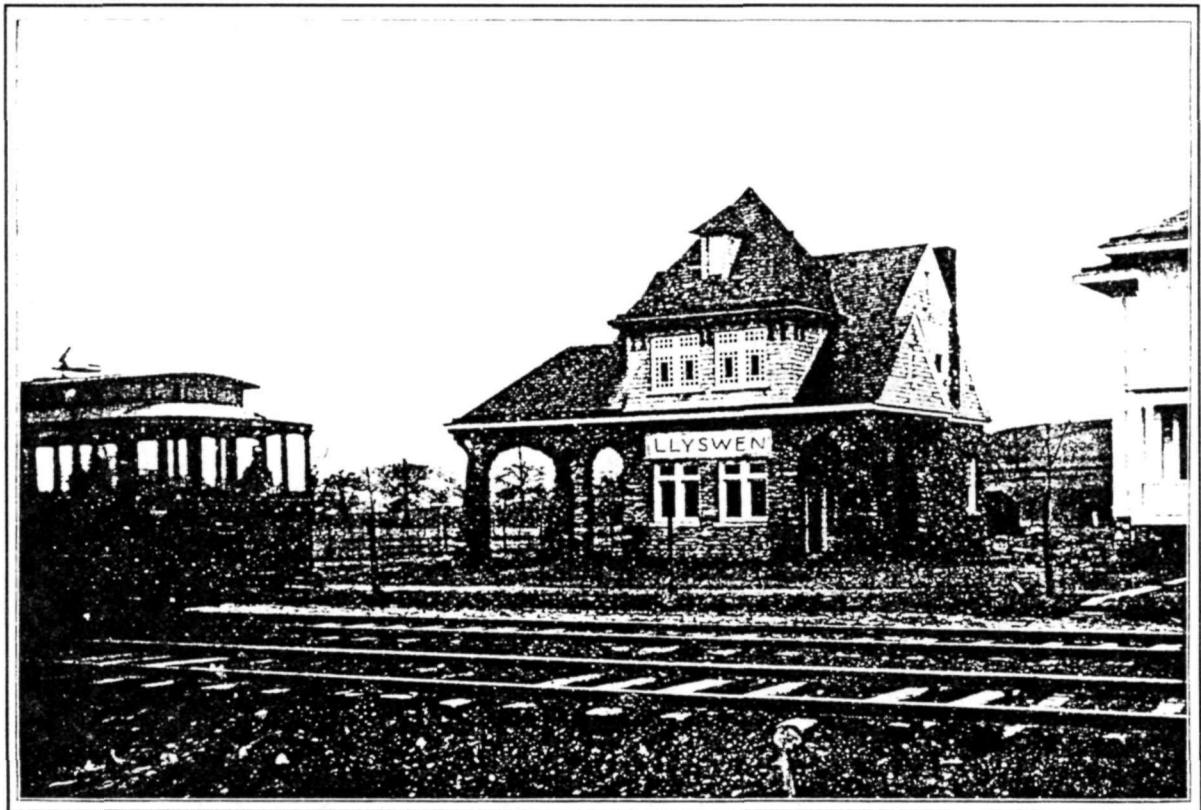


Fig. 6.5 Llyswen Station, 218 Logan Blvd., and streetcar, illustration from "Secure An Ideal Home At Llyswen," advertisement for The Altoona Suburban Home Company, *Illustrated Altoona*, (1896).

\*An asterisk following a building or address indicates that illustrations and additional information on the building can be found in its building summary at the end of the chapter.

<sup>17</sup>ASHCo minutes, 1894-1911.

on these lots were popularly known (Figs. 6.2 and 6.6), served simultaneously as model homes for Llysweners to emulate and as advertisements of the Beezer Brothers' exceptional design skills.

The affiliation with the Beezer Brothers was a coup for the development company. The twin brothers, originally carpenters from the Centre County town of Bellefonte, had opened an office in Altoona in 1892 after a year of professional architectural training in Pittsburgh. They were immediately successful. Altoona's elite embraced their picturesque style, which introduced an ambitious kind of sophistication to Altoona's neighborhoods by way of grand upright forms, substantial materials, and a profusion of ornamental details. The flamboyance--and naivete--of their first residential commissions, overwrought as they were with towers, bays, balconies, dormers, parapets, and balustrades, quickly matured into an easy but more restrained command of a traditional formal language. The brothers developed a keener sense of pleasing proportions and a feel for a balance of textures through the unity rather than the quantity of ornamentation. Brash experimentation evolved into a highly fashionable and distinctively Beezer design accent.

Their design for the Llyswen station clearly signalled this new self-assurance, a sorting



Fig. 6.6 "Cottages of Louis and M. J. Beezer (Beezer Bros.), Llyswen" (catalogue).

out of their earlier confusions over the weight and function of "style." The building's "rightness" for its suburban situation depended upon a combination of massing and materials appropriate to images in the popular mind at the turn of the century, especially the association of suburban comfort with the countrified gentility of an English village. The Cottages continued the fashion with a similarly quaint, Anglo-European architectural syntax. Yet they were unlike anything

else the Beezers built in Altoona, and the differences reinforce a particular image of Llyswen as distinct from other residential arrangements in the city. Compared to "town houses" they designed both before and after, the Cottages were informal, boxy, and solidly anchored to their sites in a manner appropriate to large suburban lots. Other differences from the brothers' intown designs included a wider variety of window types asymmetrically arranged; the use of shingles on the upper story, introducing curves and softening edges; and a front porch tucked modestly under the roof line, lending a simple economy to the street aspect—all elements of an architectural sleight of hand bent on conveying a false modesty, on masking generous scale with all the domestic signage of "cottage" proportions.

Houses the Beezers designed for Edward Flick's more-affordable Westmont development in 1896 were smaller, less-expensive echoes



Fig. 6.7 Proposed Cottage, Llyswen, Michael and Louis Beezer, *Catalogue of Beezer Brothers* (1897), 106.

of the Cottages built on smaller lots, while the whimsical designs presented in their 1893 catalog as "Lakemont Cottages" were quaint in scale and ornament. On page 106 of their 1897 catalog is the clearest evidence that the Beezer Brothers, at least, believed Llyswen had--or should have--a unique architectural signature (Fig. 6.7). Their proposed cottage for Llyswen melded the most distinctive features of the Cottages and the Whittier Avenue station into a "modern"

residence at once picturesque and unpretentious, reflecting high style at an affordable scale.<sup>18</sup>

When the Cottages were completed in 1895, there were only two or three other houses in Llyswen, and while the Beezers' residences were much admired, nothing quite like them followed. The brothers left Altoona for Pittsburgh in 1899, so heavily in debt that they forfeited their homes to creditors. Still, certain elements of the vocabulary they established persisted, largely due to the efforts and attentions of Patrick W. Finn, the contractor who built the Cottages and went on to build several of the larger houses that characterized the suburb's first generation. The basic vocabulary expressed in this generation was shingle-over-brick, a set-in front porch, a variety of decorative windows and the same cottage-writ-large play with scale. Complex roof treatments remained popular, often made more complex with conical towers, and several later cottages repeated the distinctive angle of the steeply pitched side gable. Because Llysweners built their homes independently, many chose to adopt some elements but not others, while others in the first generation chose to ignore the Beezer precedent altogether. Certainly no built response to the Cottages was ever as artfully conceived or as richly executed as the originals.

The diversity of architectural expression in Llyswen is clear evidence that it was not a planned suburb in any real sense. Although the Altoona Suburban Home Company encouraged the Beezer Brothers to set the fashion for its development, the company only sold lots; it did not build houses on speculation. It maintained, in fact, a laissez-faire policy toward the built form of its investment, a strategy that nonetheless had a determining effect upon the size, style, and type of houses built in Llyswen through the years. It is because the suburb's development was purposely left to the vagaries of the marketplace--a solidly Republican decision--that it is possible, after research and observation, to pick the threads of a chronology out of its architectural fabric.

### First Generation, 1894-1909

The first construction in Llyswen began in January 1895 on a "dwelling house" at what is now 100 West Holmes Ave. The house was built by the Altoona Suburban Home Company at a cost of \$1,987.35 and not completed until November 1897. In the meantime the company completed two other buildings: the Whittier Avenue [Llyswen] Station\* (for \$3,441.10) and an adjacent house (now 216 Logan Blvd.) identified only as the "Jones House" in early account records. A corner of this house is visible in the photograph accompanying the already-cited ad for Llyswen in Illustrated Altoona, the Board of Trade's 1896 publication. Also visible are a few of the company's initial improvements: the grading and laying of walks; future shade trees planted and staked, especially along Logan and Coleridge avenues; and the laying of cinders for streets. Among original expenditures was also the outlay of \$1,365 to change the course of Mill Run; the extent of the alteration was not recorded.

The photograph in the Illustrated Altoona advertisement emphasizes Llyswen's streetcar accessibility and the specific character of the station's architecture, both imageable assets.

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<sup>18</sup>Michael and Louis Beezer, Architecture--Practical and Theoretical, (Altoona: privately printed, 1894). Catalogue of Beezer Bros., Architects (Pittsburgh: Percy F. Smith, 1897).



It also implies that neither the Jones house nor the Holmes Avenue house were distinctive enough in themselves to fix Llyswen in the imagination of prospective homebuyers. That function was served by the Beezers' cottages, also featured in *Illustrated Altoona*,<sup>19</sup> and by "The Oaks,"\* an ornate, rambling Queen Anne-style residence built on a prominent Logan Avenue corner in 1896 by dentist J. B. Keefer. Still, the popular perception of Llyswen's character was not confined to one architectural style; two years after Harry and Harriet Bott put up a handsome Colonial house with clean, "modern" lines at 100 Coleridge Ave.\*, PRR machinist Warren Weaver preferred a conservative Victorian for his Logan Avenue lot, while electrician Alexander McLaughlin chose to erect a big, plain box of a duplex just two lots away from the self-consciously quaint-and-cozy streetcar station.

By March 1906 the company had sold more than \$106,000 worth of lots in Section I, priced from \$400 to \$900, yet only a handful of houses were built in the years between 1895 and 1906 due to a delay in the laying of water pipes and sewer lines.<sup>20</sup> Llyswen's first building boom began in 1905 while these infrastructural problems were still being worked out, and consisted for the most part of three broad architectural types.

The first of these was a form locally known as the "Llyswen cottage," yet completely unrelated to the Beezers' Logan Avenue residences. At least eight of these two-and-a-half-story, three-bay, cross-gabled houses built between 1905 and 1907 are scattered throughout Section I. The majority of them are remarkably similar in appearance and materials, even to identical interior millwork, and the compact efficiency of their three-rooms-to-a-floor plan has enabled most to survive with only superficial alterations. West Whittier Avenue has three Llyswen cottages in a row, at 203, 203-1/2\* and 205; the example at 215 Ruskin Dr.\* is the only one built with a brick veneer. The modest, rather ordinary design may have come from a pattern book or even from the office of a local contractor; still, it is interesting to note the similarities between the Llyswen cottage type and a design by Louis Beezer featured in a real estate advertisement from the July 8, 1895, edition of the *Altoona Tribune* (Fig. 6.8).

There are only four or five examples of the first generation's second type. These are all houses that directly evoke published Beezer designs for cottages and may have been built from plans they drew, although no evidence for this assumption exists beyond a familiar expression of proportions and the combination of certain signature elements: shingles on the upper story, with either brick or clapboard below; a variety of decorative window types; an exaggerated expanse of roof with porches tucked underneath; and the side-gabled roof's distinctive pitch. It is also possible that these cottages were designed and built by contractors familiar with the Beezers' work, since all were constructed between 1904 and 1907, within eight years of the architects' move to Pittsburgh. The best examples are at 206 Logan Blvd.\* and 210 Holmes Ave.\*

What houses of the third "type" have in common is not so much stylistic similarity as an ambitious sense of scale. By 1909, according to the Sanborn Insurance map of that year, most

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<sup>19</sup> Clark, 92.

<sup>20</sup> ASHCo. voucher, book, 1903-1911. Water and sewer installation problems during this period are chronicled in the company minutes.



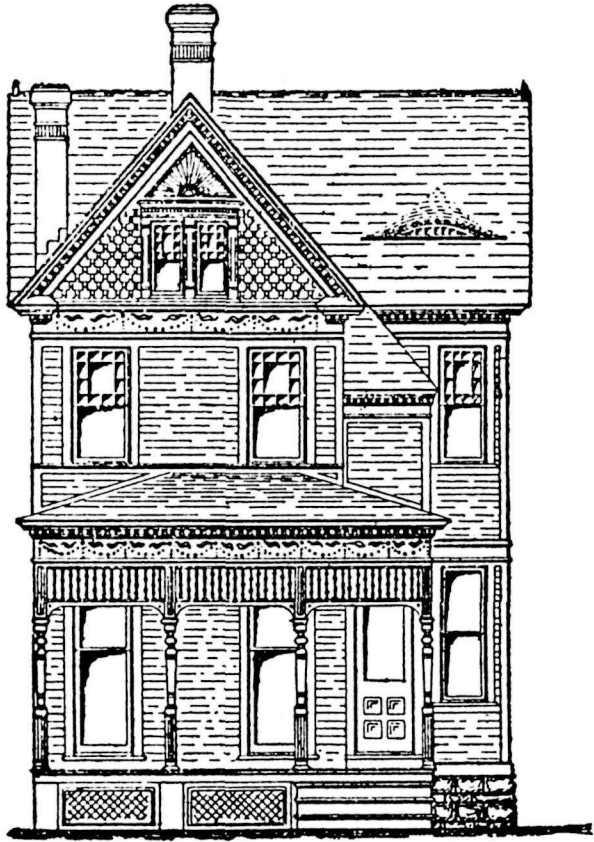
of the lots on Logan and Coleridge avenues within the project area were built upon. These were Llyswen's most formal streets, and the majority of houses completed between 1902 and 1909 were larger and more elaborate than the two cottage types already discussed. Usually of two or two-and-one-half stories and as wide as they were tall, almost all of these houses

presented a full-width columned porch and decoratively finished gabled dormers to the street. Hipped-roof houses had hipped dormers on the street facade. Corner houses were generally as deep as they were wide, with the added street interest of a corner tower (314 Logan, 312 Coleridge\*), a wraparound porch (300 Coleridge\*, 200 Logan), or both (201 Coleridge\*).

Several first-generation houses, such as those at 201\* and 312\* Coleridge Ave., borrowed elements from the Beezer cottage vocabulary, but a more significant number exhibited the fashionable symmetry of the Colonial Revival style (100\*, 209\*, 300\* and 304 Coleridge; 108\* Holmes).<sup>21</sup> The stylistic messages in all of these houses, however, are mixed, rendering a hodge-podge of late Victorian Queen Anne and Colonial Revival signs and features elaborating big, upright, boxy forms. Although well-built and often beautifully detailed, none of the builders followed through on the high-style precedent set by the Beezers or by the builder of "The Oaks."

The majority of Llyswen homeowners of this generation were of a comfortably situated skilled and professional middle class: doctors, dentists, and bankers; foremen, inspectors, machinists, and patternmakers for the PRR; carpenters, electricians, and general contractors; retail store owners and managers. In building for their families in this new

**Buy a Home.**



W. B. BANCROFT,      LOUIS BEEZER,  
ALTOONA, PA.      ARCHITECT

Young man, save your money and buy a home; begin right away. Why should you pay rent from five to ten years, and then try to buy? Now is the time. By so doing you can save what you would otherwise throw away; you would have that money paid on a home. To the older ones who have been paying rent for years, STOP PAYING RENT AND BUY. I have a number of nice properties for sale. Come and see me. W. B. BANCROFT, No. 1900 or 2200 Eighth avenue.

Fig. 6.8 "Buy a Home" advertisement, Louis Beezer design, *Altoona Tribune* (July 8, 1895).

<sup>21</sup>The builder of the house at 302 Logan\*, completed in 1913, singularly combined both of these stylistic impulses.

setting, they often overlaid modern adaptive forms with at least the semblance of traditional order. The three-bay near-symmetry of the colonized houses at 209 Coleridge\* and 108 Holmes\*, for example, both acknowledges and disguises the fact that the front entry is not centered, as it would be if it corresponded with a traditional central hall. Instead, the front door opens directly into one large front room that spans the full width of the house. This room is simultaneously (and informally) entry, stair hall, and living room, and is tacitly zoned by the door placement, which allows more living room than receiving area, but is still central enough to keep up Colonial-style appearances.



Fig. 6.9 Sylvester and Margaret England House, 300 Coleridge Ave.

The most impressive house of this generation, by virtue of size as much as for the grand confusion of its stylistic project, is Sylvester England's sixteen-room residence at 300 Coleridge Ave.\* (Fig. 6.9). England owned a downtown hardware and building supply business that specialized in roofing materials, furnaces, paints, and stoves. Externally, his house is the most telling example of the creative,

individualized formal and stylistic combinations most of the Llyswen houses of this period represent. Its conventional central-hall plan, however, along with the modest size of its many rooms and the obvious economy of interior finishes and fixtures, suggests that for the Englands at least, status in the neighborhood was more a function of external appearances than provision for a high level of interior domestic refinement. In this regard the England house is the exception rather than the rule. The majority of first-generation homebuilders chose high-quality finishes for their interior spaces. Intricately carved colonnades separating more formal downstairs rooms, elaborate mantelpieces of marble or exotic woods, ceilings with sculpted plaster swags and medallions, and an impressive array of leaded, bevelled, and stained-glass windows survive in a number of first-generation houses.

Llyswen's two double houses were also built during this period, on back-to-back lots at 210-12 Logan Blvd.\* and 213-13A Coleridge Ave.\* For many years, until financial hard times compelled a number of homeowners to divide large residences into rentable units, these

duplexes were the only exceptions to the neighborhood's single-family residences.

### Second Generation, 1909-18

No hard and fast date marks the point at which houses were no longer built to first-generation scale in Llyswen. The brick-and-shingle Queen Anne/Colonial at 302 Logan Blvd.\*, built around 1913, clearly belongs to the early period, while the modest bungalow completed at 109 Browning Ave. (Fig. 6.10) in 1909 has more in common with the suburb's second

generation of housing. The shift toward more modestly middle-class homes that began around 1909 coincided with a growing discontent among the Altoona Suburban Home Company's shareholders over the way the company was being run. The first hint that shareholders thought company management might be too inbred came at the annual meeting in spring 1907. Even though the company was doing well financially, paying a regular semi-annual



Fig. 6.10 109 Browning Ave., Llyswen.

dividend of 4 percent, shareholders voted to expand the board of directors from three members to five, including A. W. Beckman specifically representing the Baker family's interests.<sup>22</sup>

The Bakers were unhappy with John Lloyd, Sr.'s virtual monopoly over decision making, especially those regarding the provision of utility services at Llyswen by companies Lloyd controlled. At a board of directors' meeting in November 1909 at which John Lloyd, Jr., was appointed company attorney, Beckman voted against a proposed contract with an outside company to lay cast-iron water pipe in Section III, citing irregularities in the agreement between the pipe company and Lloyd's Allegheny Water Company over which would own the new pipe. Beckman's dissension escalated into a full-scale power grab at a special meeting two years later,

<sup>22</sup>Beckman was a son of Louise Baker Beckman, Sylvester's sister.

when he voted against the approval and confirmation of sales from the preceding year and against approval of the actions of the officers--a motion that had been a mere formality at all meetings up to that point. Walter Moser, company manager and general sales agent, resigned, and at the shareholders' meeting the following week Beckman, claiming that many lots had been sold on terms unfavorable to the company, had an independent auditor's report read into the record. At issue was the sum of \$1,967.62 somehow due the company, although who owed the money is not clear from the annual report.<sup>23</sup>

In the vote for directors that immediately followed this action, both Lloyds were defeated. The new directors appointed Beckman president, manager, general sales agent, and company attorney. His first action was to move the company offices from the First National Bank Building to his own office in the Central Trust Building. A resolution "that the company continue its policy of voluntary liquidation during the coming fiscal year," passed at the 1912 meeting, is the first mention in the records of such a policy. The Lloyds were represented by proxy at this and most subsequent meetings. A year later the directors, grumbling once again over the poor outlook for sewer arrangements with the city and county, agreed that the sale of lots would not be pushed until the longstanding problem of sewage disposal in Sections II and III was solved.<sup>24</sup> Neither a resolution to proceed with voluntary liquidation nor one to proceed with and press the sale of lots received a majority vote at the shareholders' meeting.

In 1914 F. Woods Beckman replaced the deceased A. W. Beckman as president and manager of the development company. Frustrated Treasurer John Cree asked fellow directors that year what the company's policy should be toward promoting the sale of lots, since they could not assure purchasers of proper sewage facilities and some lot owners were abandoning payment on property already contracted. In 1916 the company turned several of these forfeitures over to an attorney. Throughout this period, lot sales in all three sections were at a near standstill: nine sold in 1910, two in 1911, one in 1913, three in 1914, five in 1915, and four in 1918.<sup>25</sup> In 1917 the directors adopted a resolution to pursue a new and aggressive sales policy. The minutes of that meeting also include the first notation that certain lots were being leased for cultivation, but company accounts from as early as 1903 show receipts for the sale of various vegetable crops, including carrots, cabbages, and tomatoes. James Spence, who was born in the house at 312 Coleridge\* in 1909, remembers fields of corn across the street from his house and on Halleck Place when he was a boy.<sup>26</sup>

Whether or not there was a connection between the fading of John Lloyd, Sr.'s influence over the development company and its accumulating problems, the fancy of the local

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<sup>23</sup>It was eventually recovered from "sundry purchasers." The information in this section on the internal business of the Altoona Suburban Home Company is condensed from the Record of Minutes of shareholders' and board of directors' meetings from 1893 through the company's dissolution in 1926; a voucher book recording financial transactions from 1903 through 1911; and account books for 1894-95 and 1895-87.

<sup>24</sup>Sections II and III are on lower ground than Section I, have poorer drainage, and are more vulnerable to flooding from Mill Run.

<sup>25</sup>Forfeitures of seven lots in 1911 and eleven more in 1916 cancelled out lot sale figures for 1912, 1916 and 1917.

<sup>26</sup>Interview, July 18, 1989.



"aristocracy" turned elsewhere. Seemingly overnight the suburb--especially Section I--had fallen out of fashion, and the era of grand, showplace residences was over. The houses built during this period signal a changing public perception of the kind of neighborhood Llyswen was as much as they reflect the more modest means of its new residents. New houses were smaller, plainer, more conservative in many ways, and more stylistically dependent upon the familiarity of basic architectural signs such as a distinctive roof form and/or a wide, shady, symmetrically "Colonial" front porch. An unusual number combined side- or cross-gambrel roofs with full-width columned or brick-pillared porches in several Dutch Colonial variations. These were usually one-and-one-half-story houses, often with brick veneer on at least the first story. The best examples are at 211 Ruskin\*, 108 Wordsworth\*, 104 Coleridge\*, and 109 Browning (Fig. 6.10). Two-and-a-half-story versions of the same theme at 303 Coleridge\* and 312 Morningside are finished in brick and shingles and clapboard and shingles, respectively. The fad for gambrel roofs in Llyswen peaked and faded during this period.

A particular kind of bungalow also began to appear in Llyswen after 1909. These were fairly individualistic suburban residences, suggesting ease and relief from city cares. What they had in common were low, horizontal profiles, large sunny rooms, modern "circulating" floor plans, and at least the impression of customized detailing. The examples at 107 Browning\* and 109 Coleridge\* epitomize the relaxed, back-to-nature character of the Craftsman bungalow, along with the Craftsman aesthetic's emphasis on straightforward, "handcrafted" detail and construction and its association with community values. The porches of these houses are semi-public extensions of private family spaces. Wood is the "organic" material of choice, while the "honest" expression of structural elements is the primary decorative motif.

Of all the homes built during Llyswen's second generation of housing, the two-story brick foursquares at 101\* and 103 Coleridge Ave. are the clearest indicators of the extent of change in the neighborhood. Llyswen's planners provided large lots for their suburban vision, in keeping with the high-status ideal of a home surrounded by private property, commanding its own grounds. In 1915 Percy Rich, the coal company operator who lived at 100 Coleridge\*, bought the 75' lot across the street from his home, subdivided it, and built identical speculation houses on the half-lots. Apparently Rich was unconcerned that this type of development might undermine the value of his own home. Nor was he motivated solely by profit, since he eventually sold one of the houses to the Presbyterian church on the corner for a modest sum. What this Llyswen resident did was exert a kind of conservative control over his own environment in a manner that seemed, to him, both reasonable and appropriate. The development company was in a weakened financial condition; meanwhile, outside speculators were beginning to buy, subdivide, and sell Llyswen lots, often building new houses that were not up to first-generation standards. By offering for sale two respectably brick houses of respectable proportions, Percy Rich may have sought to redefine and preserve the architectural standard for Coleridge Avenue rather than leave it to the abuses of newcomers or outsiders. As the seller, he had the additional power to choose who his neighbors would be. Several similar houses were built in other parts of Llyswen between 1915 and 1930, including the one at 105 Coleridge.

### **Third Generation, 1918-29**

The third generation of housing in Llyswen spanned the years between the end of



World War I and the stock market crash of 1929. In the general post-war housing boom, the fortunes of the Altoona Suburban Home Company temporarily rallied. City officials agreed in 1919 to run sewer lines along the streets and alleys of Section III if the company's directors would take care of the necessary deed adjustments. The following year, the development company sold twenty-seven lots in Section III and nine more in Sections I and II. Shareholders received an 8 percent dividend, the first in years and the largest ever. Seventeen lots sold in 1921, forty-nine in 1922, and fifty-two in 1923.<sup>27</sup>

The home of choice in Llyswen in the 1920s was the one-and-a-half-story side-gable bungalow, with cottage windows and a full porch supported by battered brick columns. There are eight such residences on Coleridge Avenue alone. The one at 202 Coleridge\* was built on speculation in 1922 for Jacob Miller, a small-scale investor/developer who lived on Logan Boulevard in Section III. A rather standard middle-class bungalow for the period, it is unusual in the Llyswen context because it has clapboard siding and occupies a 60' wide lot. The house next door at 204 Coleridge\* and its mirror image at 204A are much more typical. These were built by developer John Seeds, who bought and sold several lots along Coleridge Avenue in the 1920s, subdivided two of them, and built these modest, no-frills, cookie-cutter houses on narrow lots that left no room for a driveway or garage.<sup>28</sup> Seeds turned a quick profit on bungalows so well-built, spacious, and modern in their layout that they survive today virtually unchanged.

Many lots on Llyswen's interior avenues were woods and fields as late as the 1950s, but when prospective homeowners began clearing corner lots on Wordsworth and Morningside Avenues in the 1920s, they built wide, comfortable, brick-veneered bungalows surrounded by sweeping lawns, like the example at 308 Wordsworth\* completed in 1927.

The only high-style residence from the third generation was the large brick Prairie-style home architect Julian Millard designed for Jacob and Ida Brett at 208 Logan Blvd.\* The west side of Logan Boulevard between Ward Avenue and Mill Run was still the most prestigious address in Llyswen, but by 1925 all the lots were built upon. The Bretts had an existing house demolished in order to have this impressive residence built by Altoona's most progressive architect. The oversized front porch conveys the exaggeration of scale Millard used as a theme in his design. Inside, the more public rooms are also grand in scale, and many rooms throughout the house had custom panelling and built-in features. All of the second-floor rooms open off of a gallery surrounding a central open stairwell. The Brett house was the last addition to Logan Boulevard in the project area.

On February 24, 1926, the directors and stockholders of the Altoona Suburban Home Company voted to dissolve the company and distribute the remaining assets. Fewer than ten lots remained unsold in all of Llyswen. Out of 2,832 shares, 1,291 were held by the estate of John Lloyd, Sr., who had died in 1921, and 1,420 by the Baker estate. All cash and most of the accounts receivable were directed to the Lloyd interests, while all remaining real estate and

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<sup>27</sup>ASHCo. Record of Minutes.

<sup>28</sup>215 and 215A Coleridge Ave. occupy the other subdivided lot.

a small portion of accounts receivable went to the Bakers.<sup>29</sup> Three years later, on January 7, 1929, the city annexed Llyswen along with South Altoona, Lakemont Terrace, Eldorado, and Roselawn--the largest annexation in its history.

#### **Fourth Generation, 1930-49**

Several annexations of outlying suburban areas in the late 1920s stretched Altoona's service obligations beyond the city's capabilities at a most inopportune time. The Depression hit Altoona--and Llyswen--very hard. The trail of building histories through the 1930s is strewn with bankruptcies, foreclosures, and sheriff's sales of homes to cover defaulted loans. Although many properties changed hands during this period, there was almost no new residential construction. A number of Llyswen homeowners found their circumstances so reduced that they were forced to subdivide their own homes for extra income. Some converted an upstairs into a separate rental unit, occasionally adding an outside stairway as a private entrance. The number of renters in the neighborhood also increased as more banks became landlords of foreclosed properties.

When Bob and Leone Schmittle moved to 208 Coleridge\* in 1932 there were no streetlights in the neighborhood. Coleridge Avenue, which did not then cross Mill Run, was paved with cinders, with only a narrow strip of asphalt down the middle. Even Logan Boulevard, a major thoroughfare, had pavement only on its west side as late as 1940, and side streets in Llyswen were still either scraped dirt or cinder roads, little changed from the suburb's early days when homeowners went out after a hard rain with wheelbarrows and shovels to patch the roads. As late as the 1940s, a large elm tree grew in the middle of Browning Avenue. Only after World War II was the city able to extend street lighting and paving to its new areas.<sup>30</sup>

Few people had the secure income or reserve of savings necessary to undertake the building a new home during this time. One who did was I. Bruce Stuckey, a letter carrier for the U.S. Postal Service who had lived and raised his family at 104 Halleck Pl. since 1904. The spacious brick house Stuckey built next door at No. 106\* in 1932, however much it appeared to convey the owner's comfortable means, was originally an income property. The Stuckeys did not make it their home until 1951.

Although the wartime build-up of the PRR re-established a semblance of job security in Altoona in the first half of the 1940s, material shortages and war-effort priorities kept building to a minimum. At least two houses built in Llyswen during this period--317\* and 318\* Morningside Ave.--were "handmade" by their young owners out of salvaged materials and built on inherited lots. Emil Engelman used windows, doors, columns, and moldings from the Cricket Club and other demolished buildings. Glenn and Doris Henninger recycled lumber from decommissioned boxcars for the frame and walls of their unusual house.

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<sup>29</sup>ASHCo. Record of Minutes.

<sup>30</sup>Interviews: Schmittle, Spence, Leopold, Henninger.

**Fifth Generation, 1949-70s**

There are few vacant lots in the project area today, but even after World War II many of Llyswen's interior properties--along Browning, Wordsworth and Morningside avenues and Halleck Place--remained undeveloped. There were several reasons why so many buildable lots stood empty. During the early years of the Altoona Suburban Home Company's success, when Llyswen's reputation as the aristocratic suburb was being reaffirmed by every new house going up on Logan Boulevard and Coleridge Avenue, a number of Altoonans of lesser means purchased less expensive lots along the interior avenues. Over the years, many of these owners took no action concerning their properties. Some may have intended to build homes but never quite gathered the resources. Others may have been satisfied with simply owning a patch of land in a good area--a traditionally secure investment in an otherwise rocky economy. Several lots went unbuilt because a series of owners suffered ongoing financial difficulties.

All three of these conditions apply to the history of 208 Browning Ave.\*, an oversized lot with equal frontage on Wordsworth Avenue. The house that occupies the site--a straightforward cottage stretched to mimic ranch-style houses of the period by the addition of a two-car garage--was built in 1951 for Joseph and Mary Ann Lamont, who bought the lot from a Llyswen couple who had owned it for twenty-six years. Another example, the tri-level residence built in 1966 at 300 Wordsworth\*, occupies one of the unsold lots left to the Baker estate when the Altoona Suburban Home Company settled its accounts in 1926. After the lot was finally purchased in 1929, consecutive owners held it for sixteen and twenty-three years. Several lots on Wordsworth have similar histories. The lot at 216 Coleridge\* was originally purchased in 1903, but not built upon until the present contemporary, stone-veneered ranch house was constructed for new owners in 1961. The vacant property had belonged to one family for thirty-eight years, passed from one generation to the next until the family donated it to the Llyswen Methodist Church. The church explored the feasibility of building a new sanctuary on the site until the Synod council rejected the idea, citing inadequate parking space.

That conservative, ranch houses with attached garages were built on two of the three properties described above is no coincidence. Ranch houses prevailed on Llyswen's late-blooming lots from the 1950s into the '60s. By the late 1960s, however, tri-level houses with modernized and highly abbreviated Colonial-style ornamentation were the most popular additions to Wordsworth and Morningside avenues. The broad asphalt driveways and two-car garages all these houses had in common became the signature elements of Llyswen's new residential architecture.

Older residences, meanwhile, were falling on hard times. More large old houses were converted into duplexes and apartments in the 1950s and '60s than in the 1930s, for a number of reasons. With little in the way of major local industry, these decades were not as prosperous in Altoona as they were in many other parts of the country. Llyswen's original housing stock was aging, requiring ever-increasing outlays of cash for basic upkeep, utilities, and modernization. Many home conversions were the decisions of elderly widows left with big, drafty houses and dwindling resources. Property owners able to invest in maintenance or remodeling invariably opted for energy efficiency and longterm savings. The most obvious marker of this pragmatic impulse was a popular taste for aluminum and vinyl siding that has since swept the neighborhood.

**1970-80s**

Llyswen's setting has changed dramatically in the last two decades, even if its fabric has not. The neighborhood is now surrounded by Altoona's busiest thoroughfares. The city's conversion of Coleridge Avenue into a through street in the 1960s led to a significant change in the character of that street in the years that followed, as more and more shoppers used Coleridge as a shortcut to the retail strips and malls south of the city. Commercial development along Logan Boulevard also presses upon Llyswen's limits, and in the last several years residents have organized to oppose the encroachment of commercial interests and parking lots upon residential property. The Llyswen Neighborhood Association has successfully opposed several such threats to neighborhood integrity, but it was recently unable to prevent an insurance agency from paving the rear lot at 218 Logan Blvd.\*, and the organization's efforts to reduce traffic on Coleridge have met with little cooperation.

The neighborhood's demographics have also changed in recent years, in large part because of the age and condition of its housing stock. Llyswen's first-generation houses were some of the finest in the city, built to last by the best craftsmen available and supplied with the most "modern" features. But tastes, along with popular standards of comfort and efficiency, changed. By the 1970s and early '80s the majority of these houses were so devalued that young couples and families could better afford a turn-of-the-century Victorian than a modern new home. A considerable number of old Llyswen houses are also being preserved and restored by middle-aged and retired residents who grew up in or around the neighborhood--or one just like it. The current owner of the house at 201 Coleridge\* first admired it as a child on his way to the candy store. Newcomers attracted by Llyswen's reputation and antique look and feel chose to invest in preserving its neighborhood identity, a very real quality of the place that obviously has little to do with architectural unity. The suburb's identity depends instead upon front porches, quiet streets, open yards under a canopy of trees, and a mix of houses and people within a middle socio-economic range--features designed into it from the beginning.

**Services and Institutions**

Llyswen's original physical plan made no provision for churches or schools. Baker Elementary School\* was built in 1907 on land provided by the Baker family. Its original four classrooms and bell tower were balanced in 1915 by a western addition of four more classrooms, a necessary expansion as the school's strong reputation attracted young families to the suburb. Expansion plans in the late 1950s and again in the late 1980s required school district officials to pay close attention to neighborhood apprehensions over the school's growth, especially when it threatened to engulf residential property.

Llyswen's two churches developed independently during the suburb's earliest years. The Methodist church began in 1905 as a small group meeting in a private home. A year later they bought a corner lot at Coleridge Avenue and Halleck Place (308 Coleridge Ave.\*), and ten years later dedicated the building that stands there today. Before their first chapel was constructed they shared a small building on Ward Avenue with the new Presbyterian congregation. The Presbyterians first came together in Lakemont Terrace in 1904, moved to a temporary chapel in South Altoona in 1906 on Baker-donated land, then moved that building to Llyswen in 1911. The present church (corner Ward and Coleridge avenues\*) was built and

dedicated in 1913. Both congregations are small but draw members from other parts of the city.

The neighborhood's most fondly remembered "institution" is Frank Zimmerman's old store at 305 Coleridge Ave.\* "Zimmie's" functioned as Llyswen's social center from the day it opened in 1906 until he died in 1963. The store carried groceries, hardware, every manner of goods and notions--even shoes and tires--but its real attractions were the soda fountain, the pot-bellied stove that stood in the middle of its one long room, the company of friends and neighbors, and Frank Zimmerman's fondness for gossip. Zimmie sold everything on credit; even neighborhood children had confidential "candy accounts" at his store. In the stable behind the store he kept a horse and wagon for deliveries. The building at 305 Coleridge is too changed today to recognize as the neighborhood haven it once was.

Llyswen's other store was the grocery at 208 Coleridge\*, first opened in 1916. It had a string of short-term proprietors through its early years until Bob and Leone Schmittle bought it in 1932. Like Zimmie, the Schmittles lived above their store, sold on credit, made deliveries all over town and stayed open late--until 9 P.M. They ran a meat counter for many years and also offered general merchandise. They retired in 1974 to a bungalow across the street from the store, which has since been converted into apartments.

Seward's Drugstore was a popular hangout on the east side of Logan Boulevard just north of Llyswen. It opened in the 1930s with a soda fountain and booths but no prescription drugs. Eventually Walter Seward added a room in the back with a jukebox for dancing. Across the boulevard was the Rivoli Theater and Sparks' Garage, which had a roller-skating rink on the top floor.<sup>31</sup>

Llyswen has never had an official park. In the 1910s men in the neighborhood converted vacant lots on Wordsworth just south of Holmes into a makeshift playground with swings, sandboxes, a slide, and a baseball field. This was maintained for several years. Kids could also hike to Highland Park or even to "Soggy Swamp," a marshy area that is the present site of the Giant Eagle grocery store. Later, ball fields and tennis courts were constructed at Mansion Park, now the recreation facility for the local school district.<sup>32</sup>

## **Llyswen**

Like Altoona, Llyswen's fortunes have fluctuated with the tides of the national and local economies. Its built environment is a clear record of changing perceptions of what "middle-class" means and has meant in Altoona society. But the mix of old and new inflections in Llyswen's fabric is one factor that keeps the neighborhood vital and interesting enough to attract new residents and keep old ones. A significant number of Llysweners stay, into the third and fourth generations, forming a pool of memory that constantly refreshes not only itself but the community as a whole. Few Llyswen residences have fundamentally changed; most have been modernized only internally. Eventually buildings are worth adapting and preserving

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<sup>31</sup>Interviews: Spence, Leopold, Miragliotta, Henninger.

<sup>32</sup>Interviews: Spence, Leopold.



because they carry meaning that goes deeper than function, positive associations that have little to do with architectural fashion or judgments of "quality."

Llyswen has historically been a place where different ends of a one-class spectrum met and mingled. Those from the sparer end were welcome to pull themselves up by the bootstraps of Llyswen's popular reputation, so solidly established by the flush of that first housing generation at the turn of the century. But even that social transaction had "polite" rules, understood but unspoken. Only one family of color, for instance, lived in Llyswen during the building years. "Middle class" was as exclusive a distinction as it was inclusive.

Still, the mix in the neighborhood--of people, of styles, of architecture--is a remarkable accomplishment. Why didn't Llyswen flourish as a reserve of the upper-middle class as its planners intended? One resident has ironically and insightfully suggested that architectural fashion thwarted John Lloyd, Sr.'s, intentions.<sup>33</sup> The aesthetic and technological conservatism of Llyswen's first-generation designers and builders made their big houses virtual dinosaurs as soon as they were completed. Llyswen was built in the vocabulary of an era that was passing. This was not just a local phenomenon; many similar ventures in towns across the nation in the 1890s met a similar fate, because Victorian architecture was already "marked": it wasn't practical or efficient or even comfortable in the technologically new senses of those criteria. More "modern" development was going on in Section III, and an important factor in Section I's quick fade was the conflicting interests of the Altoona Suburban Home Company. Prices in Section III were higher, the layout more classical, the deed restrictions more restricting: the company itself awarded Section I its "B" status in the marketplace.

Architectural fashion aside, however, the company's close attention to development in the project area through the first two housing generations helped shape the highly desirable residential character that solidified Section I as a distinct neighborhood. This character, both modified and reinforced by individual architectural responses to market forces over subsequent years, survives today as a vital expression of Llyswen's--and Altoona's--living history.

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<sup>33</sup>Interview: Kern.

## LLYSWEN BUILDING SUMMARIES

(in address order)

Jacob E. and Mintie  
Miller House I  
107 Browning Ave.

Built 1908

Description: This one-and-a-half-story, wood-frame bungalow has a pyramidal roof with wide overhangs and a front hipped dormer. The expansive porch wraps around the north and east sides of the house, supported by Doric porch-rail columns on brick piers connected by a simple wood railing. The siding is vinyl. The house has five rooms on the first floor and one room upstairs.



Fig. 6.11 Jacob E. and Mintie Miller House I, 107 Browning Ave., Llyswen.

History: In 1908 Jacob E. Miller, a buyer for Gable's department store, purchased the rear half of lot 5, block 11, from Ida Sizer, a widow, and all of lot 6 from Harry Treese, a fireman. Miller then sold the front half of lot 6 to Ida Sizer, who by the end of the year had a gambrel-roofed cottage constructed at 109 Browning Ave. Although tax records show a house on his portion of lot 5 by 1913, Miller continued to reside at 212 Logan Blvd. in the rented half of a duplex until 1919, when the city directory listed him as a grocer with a store at 208 Coleridge Ave.\* and this house, numbered as 214 Browning Ave. He sold the house to Ross Roudabush, a clerk, in 1922. Roudabush died in 1974; his estate sold the property to the present owner.

Sources: Maps: 1932, 1951. City directories. Tax records. Deed books: 147/50, 164/349, 178/492, 185/616, 183/18, 294/656, 966/940.

Joseph and Mary Ann Lamont House  
208 Browning Ave.

Built ca. 1949-51

Description: A large lawn surrounds this one-and-a-half-story, side-gabled residence covered with white masonite siding. The front door and a six-over-six-light sash placed just off center on the facade

are sheltered by a small, hipped-roof porch. Dark red cloth awnings cover flanking windows. A two-car garage is connected to the house's northeast gable end by a small breezeway. A cut stone chimney and a shed-roofed, screened porch are on the opposite gable end. A shed dormer across the full width of the rear facade allows a larger upstairs space. A patio behind the house and garage has a low curved brick wall and an arbor and provides the private exterior space within this property that has been

manicured to be a very self-conscious public display.



Fig. 6.12 Joseph and Mary Ann Lamont House, 208 Browning Ave., Llyswen.

The large, corner lot has been delineated by a flower bed that extends along the street curb. Low, red-brick piers linked by a white-painted chain are spaced along each side of the driveway. Red roses trained on trellises surround each garage door. The dark-red asphalt roof shingles and window awnings anchor this element of the color scheme. A flagpole with an American flag is set at the house's south corner. Shrubs placed close against the house are trimmed into perfectly rounded egg and bun shapes. Annuals are planted in a cut-stone planter on the porch, in a flower bed by the front walkway, and in a small, round bed with a birdbath in the corner of the lot. Even the criss-cross pattern made by the lawnmower is figured into the effect of this quintessential, post-World War II suburban property in which house and lawn are integrated in an overall design presented as a personal statement for public appreciation.

History: The Altoona Suburban Home Company first sold this large lot in 1907 for \$500. Henry and Stella Wertz of 109 Browning Ave. bought it in 1923 for \$850, apparently as an investment property. They sold it to Joseph Lamont, manager of Roxy Beverage Company, in 1949, and this house appears as a new dwelling on the 1951 tax rolls with an assessed value of \$2,200. The Lamonts raised their children in this house, and live here still.

Sources: Map: 1963. City directories. Tax records. Deed books: 180/318, 306/183, 610/438, 611/60, 816/518.



Fig. 6.13 Harry and Harriet Bott House, 100 Coleridge Ave., Llyswen.

Harry and Harriet Bott House  
100 Coleridge Ave.

Built 1902

Description: This two-story, Colonial Revival house is a wood-frame structure with weatherboard siding and a hipped roof accented by a hipped dormer at the front. The house is actually a basic foursquare form overlaid with Neoclassical symmetry and embellishments, including a wide frieze at the cornice with carved wreaths and an Adamesque panel centered on the south facade. A

formal entry with leaded fanlight and sidelights is further elaborated by a handsome Greek Revival porch. Its grouped columns, wide entablature, and crowning balustrade make a modest but authoritative visual statement of good taste and comfortable means. The capitals of the wood columns are cast iron. Folding shutters on the first-floor windows are original. Although the emphasized central entry appears to imply a corresponding central hall, it actually opens into a room that spans the width of the house. The stairway rises from a landing on the south end of the house, between the living room and the kitchen and is accessible from both rooms.

History: Harriet Bott purchased the large lot at the corner of Coleridge and Ward avenues from the Altoona Suburban Home Company for \$500, and was deeded title to the property in 1903. She and her husband, Harry, an agent of the National Cash Register Company, built this house in 1902. The Botts sold their home in 1905 for \$6,000, a substantial sum of money at that time, to Percy N. Rich, manager of the Cambria Coal Mining Company. The 1920 Sanborn map also shows a one-and-a-half-story, wood-frame garage with attached chicken coops and a separate shed on the lot. Percy and Harriet Rich occupied the house for the rest of their lives. She died in 1934, and upon his death five years later their daughter, Margaret, acquired the property. She was the wife of Warren Lee, vice president of W. S. Lee & Sons, dealers in butter and eggs; her estate sold the house to the current owners in 1986.

Sources: Maps: 1909, 1920, 1932, 1951. City directories. Tax records. Deed books: 145/142, 162/328, 361/619, 361/620, 447/597, 1134/374.

Ward Avenue  
Presbyterian  
Parsonage  
101 Coleridge Ave.

Built 1916

Description: This is a classic, no-frills American foursquare: two bays wide, two rooms deep, two stories tall. The hipped roof has front and side hipped attic dormers and overhanging eaves. Brick veneer is not standard but common, as is the full porch with its shed roof and square brick columns.



Fig. 6.14 Ward Avenue Presbyterian Parsonage, 101 Coleridge Ave., Llyswn.

History: Percy Rich, president of Standard Coal Company,

bought the lot next to the Presbyterian Church in 1915. He divided it in half and had identical houses built on the sublots in 1916. Four years later he sold the house at 103 Coleridge Ave. and conveyed this house to the church as a parsonage. It has served that purpose ever since. By the late 1910s, this kind of independent development was on the increase in Llyswn, both for speculative and for rental/investment purposes. Usually the developer was an outsider, trading on Llyswn's residential reputation and inexpensive lot prices in relation to other neighborhoods. This case is unusual only because Percy Rich lived across the street from the lots he subdivided, in a large house on an oversized lot at 100 Coleridge Ave.

Sources: Maps: 1920, 1932, 1951. City directories. Tax records. Deed books: 178/19, 228/56, 233/376, 274/283.

E. A., Jr., and Marguerite Caum House  
104 Coleridge Ave.

Built ca. 1911-14

Description: The side-gambrel roof form is uncommon in Llyswn. At 109 Browning Ave. (Fig. 6.10) it represents a well-considered design choice, adding volume and picturesque character to a compact cottage. In this larger house on a sloping lot, however, the mass and volume of the same type of roof presents an aesthetic problem: how to avoid, at this greater scale, an unfortunate resemblance to a barn. The solution of this home's designer was to accentuate the horizontal by borrowing the vocabulary of the Craftsman bungalow. The resultant clash of proportions is vaguely disconcerting. A shingle-faced shed dormer with paired windows attempts but fails to normalize the expansive roof. It does, however, project forward enough to counteract the effect of the raised foundation, which makes the house appear to "fall away" from the sidewalk viewer. Meanwhile, the low porch roof combines with a long band of



porch rail and foundation shrubbery to visually shorten the house's street facade, creating a "cozier" scale. But the bungalow overlay begins to crumble at the front stairs and thoroughly breaks down at the front wall of the house. The corresponding everyday proportions of the flagstone walk and the unelaborated entry point up the overblown scale of not only the porch stairs but the porch as a whole. To realize that the front door and picture window are of quite standard size is also to recognize that this "bungalow" is actually a very large house, in whose obscured front facade that "picture" window is all but lost.

History: This house was built sometime between 1911 and 1914. Contractor Patrick W. Finn bought the lot as an investment property from Harry Bott of 100 Coleridge Ave. in 1904. At Finn's bankruptcy sale in 1910, Edward J. Lomnitz, treasurer of Mountain City Trust Company and a small-scale independent speculator, acquired this lot along with several other Finn properties in Llyswen, including three lots and four houses. One month later he sold it for \$800 to Percy and Harriet Rich, who

acquired the house at 100 Coleridge Ave. from the Botts in 1905. Rich was something of a speculator himself. The next year, he sold this lot for \$1,500 to E. A. Caum, Jr., an engineer who also managed the Caum & Son Ice Cream Company. The 1912-13 city directory shows E. A. and Marguerite Caum residing at 104 Coleridge Ave., but the house doesn't appear on tax rolls until 1914, when the property value was assessed at \$1,600. In 1931 Caum sold it to Fred Pearce, advertising manager of the Altoona Mirror. The house was home to the Pearce family for thirty-three years. The present owners acquired it in 1973.



Fig. 6.15 E. A. Jr. and Marguerite Caum House, 104 Coleridge Ave., Llyswen.

Sources: Maps: 1920, 1932, 1951. City directories. Tax records. Deed books: 149/273, 151/556, 196/54, 197/374, 202/636, 320/304, 320/306, 400/563, 826/709, 946/727.

#### Robert H. and Patty Fay House 109 Coleridge Ave.

Built 1913

Description: This modest but distinctive one-and-a-half-story house displays many classic bungalow

characteristics. A wide bargeboard accents the low pitch of the front gable roof and the flare of the eaves, supported by exposed bowed rafters. Other horizontal effects include distinctive banding at the first story cornice line, punctuated by false beam ends between floors; paired or grouped windows, joined by a continuous contrasting sill molding; closed porch rails sheathed in clapboard, with a contrasting cap rail; and a hipped extension continuing the roof profile out over the one-story



Fig. 6.16 Robert H. and Patty Fay House, 109 Coleridge Ave., Llyswen.

portion of the house. Both the light-and-shadow of clapboard (without corner boards) and the regular rows of shingles in the gable further emphasize the horizontal. A three-sided oriel supported by curved corbels lends surface interest to the facade. Purlins and knee braces occur at window level on the second story and at the cornice line at gable ends. The entry is recessed via a cutaway porch that once wrapped around the south side of the house. The front door is extra wide, with a band of squared lights, and balanced by a large fixed-sash cottage window. All of the windows in the house have a grid of small square lights in the upper sash over larger rectangular single lights. These, and the boxed porch columns, provide the only vertical interest. The current owners added wheelchair ramps to the front and rear entrances.

History: The wide entrance and typical circular bungalow plan of connecting rooms make this house well-suited to its present use as a group home for nonambulatory mentally retarded citizens. Care providers use the two upstairs rooms. Except for the altered porch and wheelchair ramps at the front and back entrances, the house looks much as it did when it was completed in 1913. It was built for Patty and Robert H. Fay, who bought the lot from the Swards at 112 Logan Blvd. for \$1,000 in 1911. Robert Fay was a foreman for the PRR. The Fays moved to California and sold the house to Donald J. Howard, manager of the Altoona Chamber of Commerce, in 1925 for \$10,000. When Howard died in 1966, he left the house to his sister Geraldine, who occupied it along with sisters Augusta and Hilda until her death in 1980. Geraldine left the property to her surviving sisters, Augusta and Marian; Marian sold her half interest to her sister for \$12,500. In 1983 Augusta Howard conveyed the property to Marian's son Richard McNelis and his wife, Alice, for \$10,000 with the proviso that she be allowed to live the remainder of her life in the house. The McNelis's sold the house to the present owners, a Catholic Church-sponsored handicapped care organization, in 1986.

Sources: Sanborns: 1920, 1932, 1951. City directories. Tax records. Deed books: 180/481, 209/562, 331/569, 1057/381, 1093/245, 1123/844. Will books: 137/374, 153/323.

John M. and Minnie  
Baird House  
200 Coleridge Ave.

Built ca. 1907

Description: This two-and-a-half-story, asymmetrical foursquare faces Holmes Avenue. It is unusually sited, at what is now the back of a deep corner lot, yet its Coleridge Avenue facade is set back the standard 25 feet, as specified in all original Llyswen deeds. The house's chief ornaments are the various gabled dormers in the steep hipped roof and a full front porch with a hipped roof



Fig. 6.17 John M. and Minnie Baird House, 200 Coleridge Ave., Llyswen.

supported by paired, tapered columns on square brick piers. The porch rail has turned spindles. A modest front door is flanked by an elliptical stained-glass window with decorative molding and a large, three-sided bay window. The Coleridge Avenue entrance, the result of a remodeling, is a similar door adjoining a three-sided oriel. The roof of the added side porch is an extension of the oriel's pent roof. The house is clad in horizontal siding with narrow cornerboards.

History: This house, built for patternmaker John M. Baird and his wife, Minnie, first appeared on Logan Township tax records in 1907, with an assessed value for lot and house of \$1,000. The Bairs sold the house and the northern half of the original lot to Lena Walters in 1910 for \$3,450. Lena and husband Henry, a draftsman for the PRR, owned the house until 1923, but apparently never occupied it themselves. The next owners also used the house as a rental property until 1926, when consulting engineer Frank Householder purchased it and lived here with his wife, Jessie. They sold it in 1935 to a widow, who rented it out again. The current resident owners acquired the house in 1961.

Sources: Maps: 1909, 1920, 1932, 1951. City directories. Tax records. Deed books: 170/330, 200/6, 328/605, 328/603, 309/612, 353/640, 426/21, 788/641.

Franklin G. and Josephine Krall House  
201 Coleridge Ave.

Built 1906-09

Description: The most distinguishing architectural features of this grand, late Queen Anne-style house are the expansive wraparound porch, the round corner tower with its conical roof, and a hipped attic gable with a recessed balcony. Visually, the house depends more upon mass and scale than upon detailing, which is more straightforward than ornate. The dentil trim under the eaves is subtle, for instance, but there are no extraneous brackets, swags, or spindles. The house does, however, boast several fine stained-glass and bevelled-glass windows. The first story is brick veneer, with wood shingles above--a Llyswen signature. The main roof is hipped. The house occupies the southeast corner of Coleridge and Whittier avenues.

History: Sited and scaled to impress, this house was begun in 1906 but not completed in its present form until 1909. Franklin G. Krall, a machinist for the PRR, and his wife, Josephine, took up residence here in 1907, two years after they purchased the lot for \$600. Tax records describe the house as unfinished in 1906, finished in 1907, unfinished in 1908, and finished again in 1909. The Kralls sold their home in 1919 to Charles and Louise O'Neill for \$7,300. Charles O'Neill, a former coal miner and already secretary-



Fig. 6.18 Franklin G. and Josephine Krall House, 201 Coleridge Ave., Llyswen.

treasurer of the Central Pennsylvania Coal Producers Association, had only the year before "defected" to that organization from an executive position with the United Mine Workers of America. In the 1930s he was president of Peale, Peacock and Kerr, Inc., coal operators based in New York City, and by 1941 he was president of the Eastern Bituminous Coal Producers Association. The Altoona city directory for that year indicates that he was residing in New Rochelle, New York. The O'Neills sold the house at 201 Coleridge Ave. in 1942. It subsequently weathered a series of short-term owners before the present owners purchased it in 1968 for \$13,000. The current owner remembers bicycling past this house often as a child, on his way to the candy counter at Schmittle's store at 208 Coleridge Ave.

Sources: Maps: 1909, 1920, 1932, 1951. City directories. Tax records. Deed books: 160/201, 265/628, 471/105, 568/33, 604/126, 656/139, 877/299. Who's Who in American History, vol. 2, 1943-1950, 406.



Jacob and Mintie Miller House II  
202 Coleridge Ave.

Built 1921

Description: Although roughly contemporary with John Seeds's speculatively built brick bungalows at 204 and 204A Coleridge Ave., this clapboard, side-gabled example of the genre was an individual effort and exhibits more individualized, Craftsman detailing. The facade is symmetrical, with large three-part cottage windows flanking the entry and a centered dormer in the half-story with three evenly spaced windows. The front door and windows extend to the porch ceiling, and wide, simple wood moldings emphasize their verticality. Smaller square lights above long, rectangular panes accent the size and height of the windows. Battered brick columns frame the full porch, allowing a horizontal expanse further enhanced by the simple open porch rail and low, square brick piers flanking the front steps. Exposed rafters under the porch eave and shingles on the shed dormer are rustic elements. Unlike its neighbors, this bungalow occupies a full lot, allowing a driveway and garage.

History: John Baird, who built the house at 200 Coleridge Ave., sold this portion of his corner lot to William Metzgar, a pattern maker for the PRR, in 1906 for \$450. Metzgar held the empty lot until June 1921, when he sold it to Jacob and Mintie Miller. The deed for this transaction specifies a dwelling, but Metzgar was only taxed for a vacant lot in Llyswen in 1921. Miller, who lived at 103 Logan Blvd., was a very active small-scale land speculator and developer in the area. He sold the property six months later to J. T. and



Fig. 6.19 Jacob and Mintie Miller House II, 202 Coleridge Ave., Llyswen.

Alice Meredith, proprietors of Meredith's Drug Store at 1106 11th St., who were taxed in 1922 for a portion of lot 1, block 15 and a house, with an assessed value of \$2,000. It is likely that Miller had the house built in the latter half of 1921. The Merediths lost the house, which they used as a rental property, to a savings and loan company in 1937, which sold it to Carl T. and Helen Meyer in 1941 for the fulfillment of \$4,100 in mortgages. Carl Meyer was a sales auditor for the Pennsylvania Electric Company. In 1966 Helen Meyer, a widow, sold the bungalow for \$15,500. It last sold in 1975 for \$28,000.



Sources: Maps: 1932, 1951. City directories. Tax records. Deed books: 170/330, 172/202, 289/300, 294/118, 373/502, 437/260, 459/590, 851/273, 852/484, 908/270, 972/866.

John S. Seeds House II  
204 Coleridge Ave.

Built 1925

Description: This narrow one-and-a-half-story, side-gable bungalow relies upon contrasting banding in the gabled dormer and an emphasized porch beam connecting widely spaced battered brick columns for its horizontal interest. Both the wide cottage window and the band of three double-hung sashes in the dormer have upper sashes divided into vertical glazing, typical of bungalow design. Segmental arches top both the cottage window and the unelaborated entry. The first story has a textured brick veneer, with wood shingles above and in the dormer. The porch steps, piers, and closed rail are all of brick.

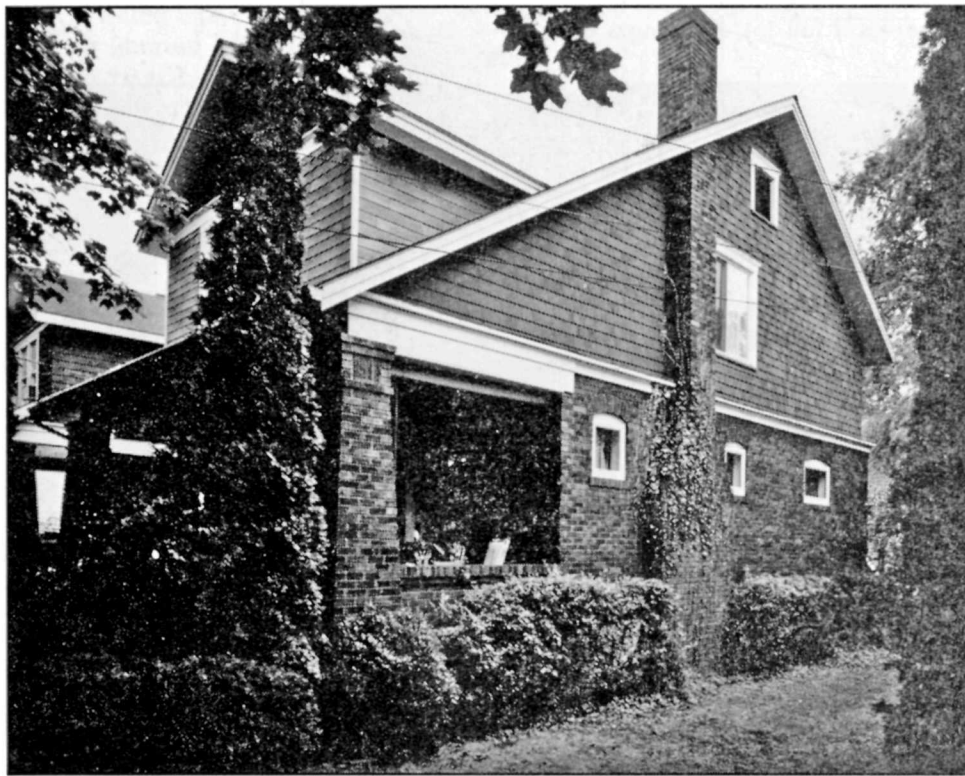


Fig. 6.20 John S. Seeds House II, 204 Coleridge Ave., Llyswen.

History: Built in 1925, this house exemplifies the kind of individualistic speculating and development that characterized much of Llyswen's growth from the late 1910s into the mid-1920s. The lot is a portion of a larger plot of land purchased by James A. Doyle, a boilermaker for the PRR, in 1907 for \$1,000. Doyle's property fronted 195' on Coleridge Avenue and 159' on Wordsworth Avenue. He subdivided in 1912 and sold a lot with 67 feet of frontage on Coleridge Avenue for \$585. Four years

later Walter Bell, an inspector for the PRR, paid \$450 for that lot. Bell had originally built a bungalow at 211 Coleridge Ave., then built another with a plan he liked better at 205 Coleridge Ave. and sold the first. He then sold this lot across the street from his new home to Walter Seward, Logan Township tax collector, for \$750 in 1921. Seward lived at 110 Coleridge Ave. and regularly speculated in vacant properties in the neighborhood. He turned a tidy profit on this one, selling it to John S. Seeds in July 1924 for \$1,200. Seeds, a real estate broker who lived in Ant Hills, was also treasurer of Altoona Brick Company and a small-scale developer. In the mid 1920s, in addition to other projects in various parts of the city, he bought several lots along Coleridge Avenue, divided them in half, and built mirror-image bungalows on the half-lots, with no room for garages or driveways. Eventually he built more than a dozen houses in Llyswen, all of them on subdivided lots. This house at 204 Coleridge Ave. was probably completed by October 1924, when Seeds sold it for \$8,200 to Ross Stiffler, a postal clerk. The

bungalow next door at No. 204A sold in March 1925 for \$8,400. Seeds also built bungalows of this design at 215 and 215A Coleridge Ave. From 1927 to 1944, No. 204 Coleridge was owned and occupied by J. Leroy Gruver, cashier of the First National Bank of Juniata, and his wife, Ruth. In the 1940s the house changed hands several times, and sold for \$10,800 in 1959. The current owners acquired it in 1968. (See John S. Seeds House I, 801 Lexington Ave.\*, First Ward)

Sources: Maps: 1932, 1951. City directories. Tax records. Deed books: 176/290, 208/652, 241/354, 317/700, 323/352, 327/58, 362/607, 501/543, 529/473, 560/422, 762/539, 876/271.

Corl's Store  
208 Coleridge Ave.

Built 1916

Description: A recent conversion into apartments has totally obscured the original appearance of this store. The basic form is a two-story rectangular box, horizontally separated into store and living quarters. The shallow, hipped roof has a sharp peak, and minor gables on the south and east. The porch dates to at least the 1930s, but until last year the columns on the first level were metal posts. The proportions of the porch are original, and reflect the high ceiling of the old store. In the remodelling, the right entry was moved to its present location behind a pillar. The front walk and porch step indicate the old store entry, between plate-glass display windows that stretched nearly from floor to ceiling. The door on the left opens to the stairway leading to the upstairs apartment.



Fig. 6.21 Corl's Store, 208 Coleridge Ave., Llyswen.

History: The Corl family ran a general store in Greenwood and a grocery store on 4th Avenue when they bought this lot in 1915 for \$790. The building first appears on tax records in 1916 in the name of Mary F. Corl, listed as a nonresident, but the deed is in the names of Henry and Clare Corl, proprietors of the 4th Avenue store. Jacob Miller, a buyer for Gable's department store who lived on Browning Avenue and occasionally speculated in real estate, bought the store for \$2,900 in 1919 and sold it to William Hartman two years later for \$4,500. Hartman ran the store and lived in the rooms above it for several years, perhaps continuing to live there even after he sold the enterprise to E. A. Caum, president of Caum Ice Cream Company, in 1926. A grocer named Hugh Hershey bought Caum out in 1929, and lived above the store with his wife, Rhea, for three years. Many long-term local residents remember that this was once Hartman's store, and several recall another storekeeper or two after him, but for the vast majority of Llysweners, 208 Coleridge Ave. has always been Schmittle's Clover Farms

Store. Robert and Leone Schmittle bought Hershey out in August 1932. They started out as general merchandisers before affiliating with the Clover Farms grocery chain based in Tyrone, Pennsylvania. The chain was formed in 1929 with sixty-six individual grocers in the area as members. Stores were distinguished by green and ivory storefronts. The Schmittles had a meat counter and continued to carry hardware and dry goods in addition to groceries. They kept their store open until 9 P.M., and delivered all over town. In those days, Llyswen had only dirt roads, no sidewalks, and no street lights. Coleridge Avenue had only a narrow asphalt strip down its center, with cinders on either side. In 1943 the Schmittles bought the bungalow across the street at 211 Coleridge Ave., but rented it out until 1947. They moved in that year and stayed until 1950, but slow business induced them to move back above the store. In March 1974 they retired to their bungalow and sold the store to Charlie Warner, who moved in upstairs and kept the store open for another two or three years. In 1989 the Warners remodelled the building into rental apartments.

Sources: Maps: 1920, 1932, 1951. City directories. Tax records. Deed books: 176/290, 235/536, 260/352, 289/6, 350/92, 380/89, 411/99, 958/730. Altoona Mirror (August 6, 1949), 44. Interview: Bob and Leone Schmittle, 211 Coleridge Ave., August 19, 1989.



Fig. 6.22 David G. and Margaret Stewart House, 209 Coleridge Ave., Llyswen.

David G. and  
Margaret Stewart  
House  
209 Coleridge Ave.

Built 1904-05

Description: The character of the architectural detail on this house is classical, but its application is relaxed and creatively adaptive. Despite first impressions and the classical overtones, the street facade of the two-and-a-half-story, hipped-roof residence is not symmetrically arranged.

Fenestration on all levels is neatly balanced, the front-facing wall dormer in

the attic story is perfectly centered but, like the typologically related houses at 304 Coleridge Ave. and 300 Logan Blvd., the entry is a bit off center. In this case, the front door is about 6 inches to the right of the central axis, which makes more enigmatic the fact that the space between the porch columns is shortened by at least a foot on the left side of the porch. The porch itself is the house's best feature. Its hipped roof flares to a dramatic overhang accented by blunt modillions, much like oversized dentils, that visually measure off the width of the house. Tall, round, tapered columns rise to winglike elements that convert square openings into curved-edge ones. The wood porch rail could hardly be simpler, but the sunburst motif in the center of each rail repeats the pattern in the dormer windows. The dormer gable is shingled, with a small projecting section at the peak decorated with small curved brackets. There are cornice returns at the gable ends, over a wide, plain frieze that wraps around the house in

smooth contrast to the house's narrow bevel siding. In the shadow of the porch, the narrow front door has a large rectangular light and is flanked by sidelights. There is a one-story, three-sided bay to the right of the entry. The wood stairway on the south side of the house leads to the duplex's upstairs entry, beneath another gabled dormer.

History: David G. Stewart, a foreman for the U.S. Postal Service, moved into this house with his wife, Margaret, one year after he purchased the vacant lot from the Altoona Suburban Home Company for \$350 in March 1905. David died in 1913, but Margaret kept this house until 1923, when she and her children sold it to Altoona High School teacher Clarence Earle Hedden for \$7,100. William and Annie Earnest bought it from the Heddens three years later. Both of them died in 1950. Rae and Simon Goldberg, proprietors of Simms Jewelers, acquired it from their estate in 1951 for \$8,500, and within the year sold it to Charles R. and Ruth Warner. It was under their ownership that the house was converted into a duplex. In 1984 Ruth Warner conveyed the property to her son, Charles, in consideration of a life estate in half of the duplex.

Sources: Maps: 1909, 1920, 1932, 1951. City directories. Tax records. Deed books: 154/346, 286/450, 306/6, 344/305, 638/78, 638/75, 645/470, 1100/873.

Christopher and  
Lana Hite House  
213-213A Coleridge  
Ave.

Built before 1905

Description: This two-story double house has a wood-frame structure and a front-gable roof. The original wood siding is now covered with vinyl, and the facade is much altered by the modern addition of large picture windows, storm windows, and panelled doors, as well as the removal of a one-story front porch that extended to the sidewalk. A pent roof across the full width of the house now protects the entries.



Fig. 6.23 Christopher and Lana Hite House, 213-213A Coleridge Ave., Llyswen.

History: Although the year of its construction is uncertain, this building appears on the 1909 Sanborn map as a two-story duplex with a small, split front porch and a full, one-story back porch, divided in half. Deed records show that Christopher Hite bought lot 16, block 9, from the Altoona Suburban Home Company in 1904 for \$350, and gave it to his wife, Lana, as a rental property for a Christmas present in 1928 along with a two-story dwelling (now No. 213B) and outbuildings on the same lot. In



1905 Christopher Hite was taxed for a house and lot in Llyswn with an assessed value of \$1,000, reduced to \$700 upon his appeal to the county commissioners. Two years later, he was assessed for two houses and one lot, with a value of \$1,750. It is not clear whether this double house is the same structure as the 1905 house, or replaced it by 1907. The second building on the lot, No. 213B, does not appear on the 1909 Sanborn map.

James Winn, born in the 1870s in the Llyswn, claimed that the duplex was originally a farmhouse that pre-dated the suburb, but no evidence was found to document this. The land on the other side of Ruskin Drive was farm acreage, and the house is eccentric among its Coleridge Avenue neighbors in its large scale, severe form (especially considering the character of Llyswn houses of the first generation), and proximity to the street, which violates original deed restrictions.

Lelia (Dolly) Kennedy bought the duplex from Lana Hite in 1946, while her husband, James, a crane operator for the PRR, was out of town. The Kennedys were living in a rented duplex at 212 Logan Blvd., directly behind their new property. Because restrictions imposed upon landlords by the World War II Office of Price Administration were still in effect in 1946, they had to wait until one or the other of their tenants chose to move before they could occupy their new home. In 1947 they moved into No. 213, and for many years rented No. 213A to James A. Winn, a retired foreman for the PRR. In the early 1960s Dolly Kennedy operated a dress shop in two rooms on the second floor of No. 213, but closed it after eighteen months because she "couldn't keep hours"--her customers were her friends and neighbors, and felt free to shop at their leisure rather than according to posted hours. When Winn died in the mid 1960s, the Kennedys remodelled No. 213A and moved in there. She sold the property in 1983 and opened another in-home dress shop at 409 Logan Blvd.

Sources: Maps: 1909, 1920, 1932, 1951. City directories. Tax records. Deed books: 147/328, 378/577, 528/286, 1094/116, 1110/37, 1141/481. Interview: Dolly Kennedy Miragliotta, 409 Logan Blvd., July 23, 1989.

William and Della  
Haines House  
216 Coleridge Ave.

Built 1961

Description: The front-gabled ell on this traditional suburban ranch house incorporates a two-car garage with side-street access into the conservative main aspect of the house facing Coleridge Avenue. The modest front gable and low roofline belie the size of the interior. Shed dormers across the entire back allow for a nearly full-blown second story. An irregularly coursed rough-stone

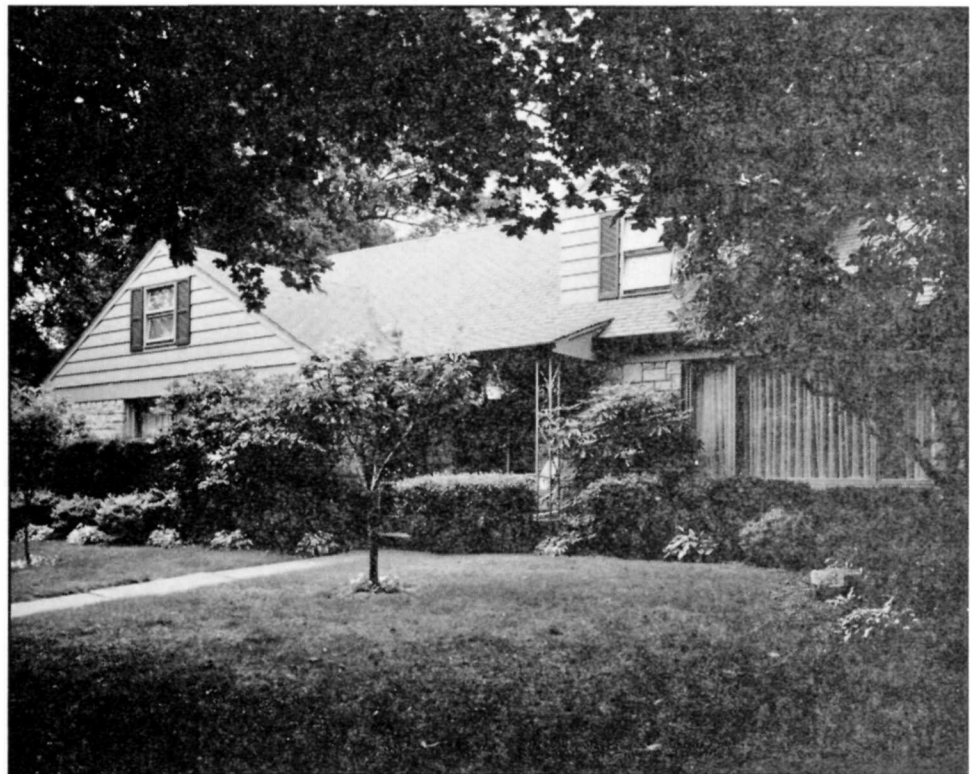


Fig. 6.24 William and Della Haines House, 216 Coleridge Ave., Llyswn.



veneer encases the front and sides of the first story, and relates the home's long, low lines to its site. The rear and upper story are sheathed in wide clapboard that emphasizes the home's typically horizontal, ranch character. A wide picture window, subordinated entry, and low foundation shrubbery complete a comfortable, contemporary suburban effect.

History: This modern home, completed in 1961, occupies a highly desirable corner lot first purchased in 1903 for \$700, sold two years later for \$750, and sold again in 1908 for \$1,100 to Elizabeth Stewart, a widow who lived on 40th Street in South Altoona. She never built on the lot, which was then twice the size of the present house's site. Through the years, neighborhood children used it as a playground and ballfield. In 1944 Stewart, by then living in Columbus, Ohio, with her daughter, Nellie, and Nellie's husband, Henry Hoover, gave the lot to her daughter. The Llyswen Methodist Church bought the property in 1946, ostensibly as the site for a new sanctuary, but the regional church office eventually decided the lot was too small to provide for both a new building and the amount of parking space required. Llyswen Methodist sold the vacant lot to William and Della Haines in 1958 for \$3,200. This house first appears on the 1961 tax roll in their names, but the Haines sold the corner portion of the property to John and Mary Houser in December 1960, and that deed also specifies a dwelling, designated 216 Coleridge Ave. John Houser was an engineer for the PRR. The house sold in 1970 for \$28,000, again in 1976 for an unspecified sum, and in 1978 to the present owners for \$57,000. This doubling of market value in a period when many larger but older Llyswen homes were severely devalued clearly suggests that modern homes were preferred and that the neighborhood itself was still highly desirable.

Sources: Map: 1963. City directories. Tax records. Deed books: 143/659, 157/352, 181/518, 487/363, 551/416, 755/11, 783/49, 904/121, 979/687, 1017/977.

Sylvester and Margaret England House  
300 Coleridge Ave.

Built 1907

Description: This two-and-a-half-story, brick-veneered house is massive by Llyswen standards and unique in its eccentric combination of Neoclassical and Victorian elements. The low-pitched roof is cross-gabled with a modest cornice and brackets, continued across the front gable as a frieze band interrupted by a wide, pedimented window in the attic story. Beneath it is a large window with a rusticated stone segmental arch, and



Fig. 6.25 Sylvester and Margaret England House, 300 Coleridge Ave., Llyswen.

beneath that, under a deep, wraparound porch, is a classical entry with rectangular bevelled- and leaded-glass transom and sidelights, flanked by large cottage windows with bevelled-glass lights above. Other windows have smooth limestone sills and rusticated flat arches. The small rectangular windows above the second-floor windows are unusual; they illuminate third-floor rooms at floor level. The columned porch has a surprisingly delicate balustrade, in relation to the mass of the house. The porch stairs are at the northeast corner, but the house faces Coleridge Avenue.

For all its grand scale, the interior of the house, which includes about fifteen rooms, is surprisingly modest. Woodwork in the more formal front rooms is oak, but the rest of the house is finished in yellow pine stained to simulate the color and graining of finer woods. Mantels in the downstairs parlors are Craftsman-style and scaled to these small rooms, which are separated by a central stair hall. As substantial as the house appears, it is still three stories of brick veneer over a wood balloon frame, with no subfloor. Load-bearing interior walls are not located over corresponding foundation support, so that all the downstairs pocket doors have sagged and no longer slide freely.

History: Sylvester England, purveyor of hardware, roofing, paints, and stoves, paid \$900 for this prestigious corner lot in 1903. The house was built in 1907. City directories indicate England was still living above his store on 6th Avenue that year, but tax records show a house on this lot with a combined assessed value of \$1,500. By 1912 he was listed in the city directory at this address. England also bought the lot directly behind the house, fronting on Whittier Avenue, and had outbuildings there. By 1932 this was the site of a three-car garage. Several local residents recall hearing that England intended the house to become a sanitorium after his residency; the modesty of its interior finish and the floor plan, with many small rooms off central hallways, and the house's rather "institutional" exterior appearance supports this claim, but it could not be documented. J. Clair Hegarty, a coal operator from Coalport, and his wife purchased the property from England in 1919 for an undisclosed sum. During their tenure, the large front room on the third floor often served as a meeting hall for local groups, including chapters of both the Ku Klux Klan and the Daughters of the American Revolution. J. C. died in 1945, but Olga Hegarty, his widow, occupied the house until 1974. The Hegarty's owned a general merchandise store as well, and over the years stored much of their superfluous stock in the house. After Olga's death, the executors of her estate conducted an auction on the front porch that Llyswen residents still talk about. The event went on for several days and included everything from gold coins to boxes of brand new ladies' highbutton boots from the turn of the century. The estate sold the house to the present owner in 1975 for \$20,900.

Sources: Maps: 1909, 1920, 1932, 1951. City directories. Tax records. Deed books: 141/404, 270/270, 485/459, 967/338. Interviews: George and Theresa Rieker, 300 Coleridge Ave., August 12 and 18, 1989. Bob and Leone Schmittle, 211 Coleridge Ave., August 19, 1989. Sara Coon, 312 Coleridge Ave., August 19, 1989.

### Frank L. Zimmerman House 303 Coleridge Ave.

Built 1913

Description: Among houses of the Dutch Colonial variety in Llyswen, the size of this front-gabled example is unusual. The two-and-a-half-story house has a severe, symmetrical facade of brown brick veneer, with pronounced cornice returns and segmental arches over the windows providing the only decorative accents. Four plain Doric columns on brick piers support the roof of the full porch. Both the sidelights and transom of the entry, to the left of the stairs, and the smaller light over the large cottage window to the right of the stairs contain leaded, bevelled glass. A two-story bay on the north side of the house is surmounted by a pedimented dormer faced with fish-scale shingles. The present owners added the shed-roofed attached garage in the 1960s.



Fig. 6.26 Frank L. Zimmerman House, 303 Coleridge Ave., Llyswen.

History: Frank Zimmerman bought this lot in 1911, after he and his family had lived over their store at 305 Coleridge Ave. for several years. Construction began on the house in 1913; it was the Zimmerman residence by 1915. The present owner acquired it in 1964, a year and a half after Frank Zimmerman's death.

Sources: Maps: 1920, 1932, 1951. City directories. Tax records. Deed books: 173/328, 205/152, 813/308, 824/630.

Zimmerman's Store  
305 Coleridge Ave.

Built 1906

Description: Completely remodelled in the 1960s, this two-story, front-gabled, rectangular building, now covered in aluminum siding, bears little resemblance to the general merchandise store it was for nearly sixty years. The store entrance was recessed and centered in the west facade fronting on Coleridge Avenue, and flanked by display windows



Fig. 6.27 Zimmerman's Store, 305 Coleridge Ave., Llyswen.

across the front of the building. Both the downstairs and the upstairs were open, without partition walls, and had pressed-tin ceilings. A cast iron, pot-bellied stove occupied the center of the store. The upstairs is now the offices of an architectural firm whose entrance is a small brick porch on the north side of the building. Downstairs are three small apartments, with separate stoops on the south side. A former stable at the rear of the property has lately been converted into a small residence.

History: The tax record for 1906 shows an unfinished store on this lot belonging to grocer Robert Zimmerman. The following year, the finished store was in the name of Frank L. Zimmerman, also a grocer. According to the 1906-07 city directory, Frank ran a store here and lived upstairs; Robert boarded at this address. Zimmie's, as Frank's store was known locally, was the primary retail and social center of Llyswen for three generations: "If you couldn't find it in Zimmie's, you couldn't get it in Altoona." Frank Zimmerman sold everything from groceries to shoes to wheel barrows and paint, on credit, and kept a horse and wagon in the stable out back for home deliveries. In 1915 the Zimmermans moved out of the space above the store, which they had divided into "rooms" with temporary plywood partitions, and into their new house next door at No. 303. They continued to operate the store until Zimmie's death in 1963. His estate sold both properties to Carmen and Mary Catherine Patete. Carmen remodelled the upstairs of the old store to house the office of his engineering firm, and converted the downstairs into apartments. The Patetes sold the building to an architect in 1988.

Sources: Maps: 1909, 1920, 1932, 1951. City directories. Tax records. Deed books: 116/502, 153/426, 191/476, 205/152, 813/313, 1168/193.

Llyswen Methodist Episcopal Church  
308 Coleridge Ave.

Built 1915-16  
Architect: F. J. Shollar

Description:  
Functionally, this church has two parts: a cross-gabled sanctuary with a square entry/bell tower facing Coleridge Avenue, and a contiguous side-gabled Sunday School building with an entry porch on Halleck Place. The wood-frame structure has a stone foundation and a yellow brick veneer, divided by a water table of smooth

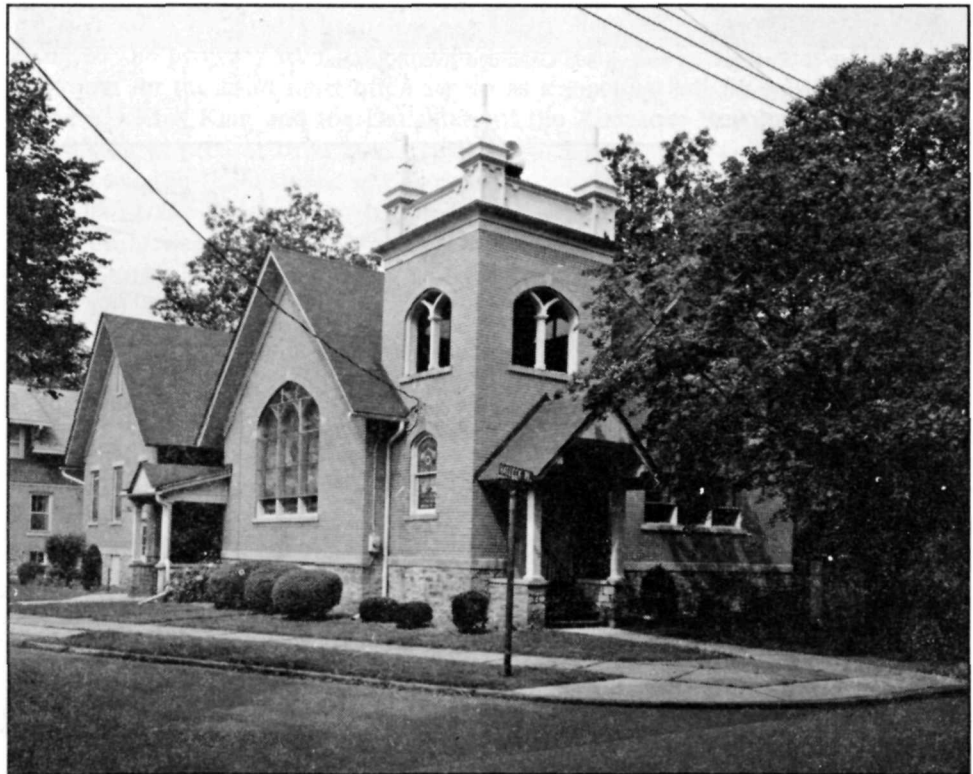


Fig. 6.28 Llyswen Methodist Episcopal Church, 308 Coleridge Ave., Llyswen.

limestone. The character of the design is vaguely Gothic, but the detailing is both modern and conservative; the open eaves are free of brackets, tracery or truss work. Horizontal and vertical emphases are balanced in a form that conveys ample mass even at this modest scale. Simple exposed



trusses in the gable of the front porch have been boxed in. Wood framing divide the sanctuary's wide stained-glass windows into pointed Gothic arches, an effect repeated in the bell tower openings. The tower has a projecting wood cornice with a panelled wood parapet above and squared pinnacles at each corner. There is an elliptical stained-glass fanlight over the double doors of the sanctuary entrance, and both porches have square wood columns on stone piers.

**History:** Before this building was completed in 1916, the Methodist congregation in Llyswen met first in the home of Arthur R. Olewine at 205 West Whittier Ave., then in the Baker School building, and later in a storeroom on the present site of the Ward Avenue Presbyterian Church. In 1906 the trustees of the congregation purchased this lot at the corner of Coleridge Avenue and Halleck Place for \$800, and when the Presbyterians bought the lot on Ward Avenue in 1907 the Methodists commissioned contractor Patrick Finn to construct a small, wood-frame chapel on their own lot. One week and \$450 later, they had a meeting house that more or less served their needs for nine years. The chapel was moved to the present site of the parsonage when construction on this building began in 1915. The architect was F. J. Shollar. J. C. Orr and Son contracted for the construction, which cost \$6,300. The new sanctuary was dedicated on February 20, 1916. When construction began on the parsonage in 1919, John W. Edgely purchased the old frame chapel, moved it to 301 Coleridge Ave., and converted it into a bungalow by widening the building, adding a second story and a brick porch, and encasing the original structure in brick veneer. In 1989, Llyswen Methodist Episcopal Church celebrated the 75th anniversary of the dedication of its congregation with a block party on Coleridge Avenue.

**Sources:** Maps: 1909, 1920, 1932, 1951. Deed books: 166/622, 166/625, 237/472. "Anniversary Program, Llyswen Methodist Episcopal Church," February 16-23, 1936. "Twenty-Fifth Anniversary of the Dedication," January 19-26, 1941. Interviews: James E. Spence Jr., 314 Coleridge Ave., July 15, 1989. Grace Kerns, 5410 Montrose Ave., August 7, 1989.

James E. and Flora Neff Spence  
House  
312 Coleridge Ave.

Built 1907

**Description:** Except for the front porch's new concrete foundation, the exterior of this house is virtually unchanged since it was finished in 1907. The two-and-a-half-story, wood-frame structure has a steep, cross-gable roof with modillions at the cornice, and a three-story round tower at the northeast corner with a bell-shaped roof and turned finial. The first story has a veneer of yellow brick outlined by a wide, plain frieze at the cornice line; the second and attic stories are shingled, with contrast banding across the tops of the windows. The wide, balustraded front porch has round columns



Fig. 6.29 James E. and Flora Neff Spence House, 312 Coleridge Ave., Llyswen.



constructed like barrels, with curved wood slats held together by bands. These rest on limestone caps atop square brick piers, with a simple wood porch rail between. The front door and first-floor windows have segmental brick arches. Interior woodwork is especially rich downstairs, where the living room and entry/stairhall are separated by a colonnade.

History: Sometime after May 1903, when construction began on a new paper mill in Williamsburg, Pennsylvania, Patrick W. Finn, building contractor for the mill, sent for James E. Spence, an electrician who had worked for him in New York. Finn hired Spence to supervise the wiring of the mill, which was being financed by Williamsburg native Charles Schwab, president of United States Steel Company. In Williamsburg, Spence met and married Flora Neff. By March 1907 they had settled in Altoona and purchased this lot at the corner of Coleridge Avenue and Halleck Place, next door to the new home of James B. Finn, probably Patrick's brother or son. Spence and James Finn were partners in an electrical-contracting firm, with offices in Altoona and Hollidaysburg. Spence drew the plans for this house himself, with Flora's considerable influence. She wanted the main rooms downstairs to look just like those she admired in the Finn's house next door, down to the same millwork. Spence was also his own general contractor for the house's construction, which was completed in 1907. Three years later, he transferred the property to his wife's name, probably to protect their home from the economic repercussions of Patrick Finn's impending bankruptcy--a prudent move, in that Spence's business interests were closely bound to those of the Finns. In 1974 widow Flora Neff Spence sold the house to its present owners.



Fig. 6.30 Joseph L. and Catherine Kirk House, 101 Halleck Pl., Llyswen.

Sources: Maps: 1901, 1920, 1932, 1951. City directories. Tax records. Deed books: 173/478, 174/532, 174/534, 185/100, 233/554, 197/540, 964/944. Interview: James E. Spence, Jr., 314 Coleridge Ave., July 18, 1989.

Joseph L. and Catherine Kirk House  
101 Halleck Place

Built 1906

Description: This two-story, wood frame, side-gable house has a gabled ell in front next to a one-story porch. Another gabled extension with a chimney is on the west side of the house. Both of these minor gables have cornice returns. Large, square "cottage" windows on the first floor front have small rectangular lights above. The exterior of the house is in fairly original condition, including the original drop siding, but the front porch has been altered. The original columns were round and tapered.

History: Flora Neff Spence once remarked to the current owners of this house that she observed its construction in 1906, the same year her house was being built at 312 Coleridge Ave.; the contractor for

both was P. W. Finn. She also remembered that lumber salvaged from an old church kept its cost down to the reasonable sum of \$1,000. Joseph L. and Catherine Kirk bought this lot in 1906 for \$350, and although city directories never show them living here, Mrs. J. L. Kirk was taxed for an unspecified house and lot in Llyswen in 1907. Joseph, who died in 1918, was an electrician. In 1924 his widow sold the property for \$5,300 to Alexander Stewart, a letter carrier. Following a sheriff's sale in 1942, the house changed hands several times before Hartford Pearce, loan manager for Commercial Credit Corporation, acquired it in 1946. He and his wife, Eleanor, lived here for several years, then rented the house out before selling it to the present owners, Louis and Anna Leopold, in 1954. Louis is a second-generation Llyswen. Anna was raised in Juniata; her mother taught at Baker School around 1915.

Sources: Maps: 1920, 1932, 1951. City directories. Tax records. Deed books: 168/475, 321/306, 465/613, 472/114, 476/299, 498/219, 536/516, 694/454. Interview: Louis and Anna Leopold, 101 Halleck Place, July 22, 1989; correspondence, August 16, 1990.

I. Bruce and Mary  
Stuckey House  
106 Halleck Pl.

Built ca. 1932

Description: Except for the patterned brick borders of the closed porch rail and the simple caps of the three square porch columns, this is a very plain, straight-ahead version of a brick-veneered American foursquare, a solid representation of middle-class comfort in the late 1920s. The two-story, wood-frame house has a hipped roof with a hipped front dormer, side chimney, and overhanging, enclosed eaves. A full front porch covers an off-set simple entry and a wide cottage window with a narrow rectangular light over a single large square pane. Double-hung windows on the rest of the facade and sides are symmetrically placed and accented by white shutters that are strictly ornamental. A modern one-story, one-room addition on the east side of the house has a side-gable roof and is clad in vertical wood siding.



Fig. 6.31 I. Bruce and Mary Stuckey House, 106 Halleck Pl., Llyswen.

History: This house has been in the possession of one family since it was built around 1932. I. Bruce Stuckey, a letter carrier for the U.S. Postal Service, first built a "Llyswen cottage" at 104 Halleck Pl. in 1907. In 1928 he purchased the neighboring lot and had this house built, but did not live here until 1951. That he chose to invest a considerable sum of money in a rental property at the onset of the lean years of the 1930s very likely represents Stuckey's confidence in the long-term stability of the Llyswen neighborhood. After his death in 1952, his widow continued to live in the house, but the 1953

city directory shows her sharing it with boarders. Other Stuckey heirs managed the property as a rental after her death. Bruce Stuckey's grandson has owned and occupied the house since 1977.

Sources: Maps: 1932, 1951. City directories. Tax records. Deed books: 176/595, 403/9, 533/193, 905/104, 921/263, 946/340, 1000/240.

James M. and Lizzie N. Skyles House  
108 Holmes Ave.

Built 1907

Description: Generous and straightforward wood trim, especially the wide bargeboards in the porch and dormer gables and the plain, flat bands accenting doors and windows, gives this house a more modern appearance than three other similarly styled Colonial houses within a three-block area on Coleridge Avenue and Logan Boulevard. This style is a unique combination of influences, although its basic form is a rationalized Queen Anne still dependent upon projecting bays (Fig. 6.33) and dormers for surface interest, but spared the more frivolous and dated complexities. All four examples have an eccentrically offset entry, exaggerated in this case by the dual emphasis of an elaborate door surround (complete with bevelled-glass sidelights, cornerlights, and transom) and a quasi-classical pediment set into the shed roof of the full porch. Also unique to this house are the side-gable roof and the two minor gables surmounting the bays.



Fig. 6.32 James M. and Lizzie N. Skyles House, 108 Holmes Ave., Llyswen.

History: Veronica Fogle, wife of woodworker and Altoona Suburban Home Company principal John A. Fogle, purchased this lot in 1896 for \$800. In 1906, she sold it for \$1,000 to Lizzie N. Skyles, wife of James M. Skyles, cashier at the First National Bank where John Lloyd was president. The house was probably begun in 1907, when the Skyles were taxed for a house and lot in Llyswen, but 1908-09 tax records describe the house as unfinished. It does not appear on the 1909 Sanborn insurance map. The 1912-13 city directory shows the Skyles residing at 111 Coleridge Ave., which corresponds with this lot and house, although it faces Holmes. James Skyles was vice president of the First National Bank in 1925 when he and his wife sold the house and half of the original lot to Amos Davis, assistant manager of the Juniata shops of the PRR. The Davis family owned and occupied the home until 1971.

Sources: Sanborns: 1920, 1932, 1951. Tax assessment records. City directories. Deed books: 160/79; 167/228; 342/104; 915/128.



Fig. 6.33 James M. and Lizzie N. Skyles House, 108 Holmes Ave., detail of sunburst panel on side bay.

A. W. and Lavinia Rudolph House  
210 Holmes Ave.

Built 1904

Description: Another possibly Beezer-inspired design, this one-and-a-half-story, wood-frame cottage has horizontal wood siding on the first story and wood shingles above. Its steep, side-gable roof has no overhang at the gable ends and no eave at the rear of the house, but flares out at the front to cover a full-width porch supported by simple boxed columns. The house's main ornaments are the wide, hipped gable at the front and a small, diamond-paned bay window on the west side, toward Ruskin Drive (formerly Duncansville Road). The house faces the right-of-way for Holmes Avenue, which was never completed west of Wordsworth Avenue. The houses at 206 Holmes Ave. and 201 Ruskin Dr. are also oriented toward this nonexistent avenue.

History: Dorothea Rudolph bought lots 8 and 15 of block 16, fronting on a proposed western extension of Holmes Avenue to Duncansville Road, for \$575 in 1903 from the Altoona Suburban Home Company.

Less than a year later, she sold the western portion of lot 15 to her son A. W., a clerk for Patrick W. Finn, and his wife, Lavinia, for \$500. This house was built by April 1905, when the Rudolfs sold it for \$3,100 to Harry DeViney, one of the proprietors of the Hotel Carlton on 11th Avenue, and moved to Pittsburgh. In 1906 they returned and purchased the property back from the DeVineys for the same amount. The 1906-07 city directory lists A. W. Rudolph as a contractor, living at Holmes and Duncansville avenues. Philip R. Arnold, an electrical contractor, bought the house in 1909 and sold it three years later to Ernest K. Post, supervisor of signals for the PRR. Post and his family lived at 210 Holmes for eight years. In 1920 John Williams, a traveling salesman, and his wife, Rosa, bought the house and made it their home until 1937, when the Blair County sheriff conveyed it to Berks County Trust Company for \$277.21. James and Grace Thompson acquired the property in 1941 for \$4,250. He died in 1970, and after her death in 1985 the executor of her estate sold the house to the present owner.

Sources: Sanborns: 1920, 1932, 1951. Deed books: 143/428; 151/80; 154/583; 157/534; 157/536; 165/156; 191/568; 211/144; 274/49; 434/60; 459/693; 1127/754. City directories.





Fig. 6.34 A. W. and Lavinia Rudolph House, 210 Holmes Ave., Llyswn.

Warren R. Weaver House  
106 Logan Blvd.

Built 1904

Description: The wide front-gabled porch of this two-and-a-half-story Queen Anne firmly anchors the verticality of both the steeply pitched front gable surmounting a two-story bay and the octagonal tent roof of the two-story oriel. Above a pent closure, the front gable is faced with shingles in a geometric pattern. Corner boards and wide window frames accent the narrow horizontal siding. The sunroom on the south side of the house is a late addition.

History: This house was built in 1904 for Warren R. Weaver, a machinist for the PRR, on a lot he purchased from the Altoona Suburban Home Company for \$600 and paid off in 1909. He lived there with his family until the late 1950s, when the house was rented out for several years before Weaver, a widower, sold it to the current owners.



Fig. 6.35 Warren R. Weaver House, 106 Logan Blvd., Llyswn.



Sources: Sanborns: 1909, 1920, 1932, 1951. City directories. Tax records. Deed books: 145/277; 779/289.



Fig. 6.36 The Oaks, 112 Logan Blvd., Llyswen. Perspective of west side and turret.

The Oaks  
112 Logan Blvd.

Built 1896

Description: This elaborate Queen Anne house has an unusual low-pitched, front gable roof with minor secondary gables at the front and sides, and a flat roof over the rear of the house. There are decorative brackets and dentils under the flared eaves all around. The large oriel at the northeast corner of the second story has a conical roof with an ornamental finial and flared eaves. It also has bowed windows with a distinctive sill treatment including an encircling band of trim with small brackets at each window frame. The underside of the oriel is festooned with decorative swags. Both the front (east) and south sides of the house have two-story bays with the same sill band, and a wraparound porch with squared columns and a simple, geometric balustrade. The house has drop siding except on the oriel, which is clad vertically for a smooth finish.

History: This house was built in 1896 for Dr. J. B. Keefer, a dentist, who paid \$900 for the prominent lot.

In 1901 Hiram and David Parker, contractors and builders who owned a planing mill in Juniata, acquired the property through a sheriff's sale, and two years later sold it to Kate Seward for \$4,500. Seward's husband, Orlenzo, was the manager of L. Hoster Brewing Company. The 1904-05 Polk directory lists their residence as "The Oaks, Llyswen." In 1917 widow Kate Seward sold the house and the lot beside it, including a large two-story garage and several outbuildings, to Katharine Morrison for \$7,858. Patrick Morrison operated the Colonial Hotel on 12th Avenue. The Morrisons lost their house to a mortgage company in 1938, which then sold it to Lovell Malone, a locomotive engineer for the PRR, in 1944 for \$4,500. A. M. Jacobs, manager of Jacobs Motor Company, a Hudson dealership, purchased the property in 1949 and lived in the house with his wife, Mae, until his death in 1968. Her estate sold it in 1971 for \$15,000. In 1983 the owners razed the old stable-turned-garage and converted the house into an upstairs/downstairs duplex. Two of the original large oak trees still shade the front yard.

Sources: Sanborns: 1909, 1920, 1932, 1951. City directories. Tax records. Deed books: 108/383; 144/250; 249/128; 437/478; 486/249; 611/57; 922/261; 1073/72; 1082/553; 1156/187.



Fig. 6.37 The Oaks, 112 Logan Blvd., Llyswen.



Fig. 6.38 Maude Closson Talley House, 206 Logan Blvd., Llyswen.

Maude Closson  
Talley House  
206 Logan Blvd.

Built 1907

Description: The "Llyswen cottage" has several incarnations, but this is one of a very few examples obviously derivative of the Beezer model established at 306 and 308 Logan Blvd., and possibly based upon plans for model suburban cottages drawn up by the Beezer Brothers firm and familiar to local contractors. This two-story wood-frame house has a side gable roof with a clean rake and no eave at the rear. Because of the L-shaped plan, the second story has a prominent front gable with cornice returns. The roof line extended to incorporate the front porch not only enhances the compact, upright character of the house, but also provides the ground for a three-sided dormer with bevelled glass in the multiple panes of the upper window sash. Paired, tapered columns on square brick piers linked by a delicately spindled rail support the porch roof. The first story has a

painted brick veneer, with brick segmental arches over the entry and windows. Sidelights complete the front door surround. The second story is clad in wood shingles, and the slight flare at the first-story juncture enhances the overall "cottage" effect. There are three rooms and a hallway on both floors.

History: Caleb H. Closson, a physician, purchased this lot in 1906 in the name of his daughter, Maude, for \$750. The house was completed by 1907 and occupied by Maude and her parents. Not long after, Maude, who was a nurse, left to marry Dr. Frank Talley of Pittsburgh, but within months she was widowed. The 1912-13 city directory lists Kate Closson, Caleb's widow, and Maude Talley as the residents of 206 Logan Blvd. By 1930 Maude was alone in the house, but soon thereafter met and married Clyde Jones, a letter carrier, who continued to live in the house after her death. In 1953 he began to rent the house out. After his death in 1967, Jones's heirs sold the property to an Altoona Area School District teacher and his wife for \$9,000. Somewhat neglected as a rental property, the house was gradually restored by a succession of owners in the 1970s. By 1978 it sold for \$31,300. The current owners bought it in 1984.

Sources: Maps: 1901, 1920, 1932, 1951. City directories. Tax records. Deed books: 160/432, 704/284, 865/542, 916/3, 1015/570, 1104/481. Interviews: Kirk and Shawn Leidy, 204 Logan Blvd., July 15, 1989. Melvin and Sissy Kedane, 206 Logan Blvd., July 15, 1989. Bob and Leone Schmittle, 211 Coleridge Ave., August 15, 1989.

Jacob and Ida Brett  
House  
208 Logan Blvd.

Built 1925

Description: This large, two-and-a-half-story, side-gable house is the only example of Prairie style architecture in the project area. Long, low-pitched gables over the wide dormer and even wider porch combine with the extended roofline and bands of windows to produce a striking horizontal effect, further exaggerated by the contrast of white wood trim against the unrelieved brick facade. The veneer



Fig. 6.39 Jacob and Ida Brett House, 208 Logan Blvd., Llyswen.

is of brown brick in a Flemish bond, with glazed headers. Massive, battered brick columns support the porch roof and a flat-roofed porte cochere on the south end of the house. The front door has fifteen lights of bevelled glass, flanked by wide sidelights and surmounted by a long transom with bevelled glass in geometric patterns. Windows on the first-floor facade are oversized, with multi-paned bevelled-glass transoms echoing the entry. A band of windows encloses both ends of the porch. Many original built-ins and some paneling remain in the interior, but the living room fireplace and paneling have been

removed. This room, on the north side of the first floor, is quite large, stretching the full depth of the house. The second floor has a gallery around the central stairwell.

**History:** Architect Julian Millard probably designed this residence for department store owners Jacob and Ida Brett in 1925. The Bretts bought the lot and a house with an assessed value of \$4,500 from Howard and Effie Fleck in 1923. Two years later, they paid taxes on the lot and a house with an assessed value of \$7,000, plus a two-car garage. Millard had recently designed the Brett's new downtown store, and he was the only architect in Altoona designing in this distinctively modern style. Since the Bretts did not live at this address until 1925, they very likely had the original house razed or moved and replaced by this larger, more up-to-date residence, an important advertisement of Brett taste on the so well-travelled boulevard. The Bretts sold the property in 1947 to Simon and Rae Goldberg of Simms Jewelers, who kept it until 1964. The house had several short-term owners throughout the 1960s and 70s. The present owners acquired it in 1988.

**Sources:** Maps: 1920, 1932, 1951. City directories. Tax records. Deed books: 166/553, 183/240, 202/184, 219/168, 279/140, 265/148, 285/664, 306/427, 556/225, 823/121, 863/261, 871/617, 876/486, 918/530, 934/677, 1157/213. Interview: Robert Seymore, 208 Logan Blvd., August 16, 1989.

### Alexander and Mary McLaughlin House 210-12 Logan Blvd.

Built 1904

**Description:** This two-story, cross-gabled double house has three bays per side and full porches on both levels, supported by boxed wood columns. The front of the house has false bevel drop siding. The facade also has the original tall, narrow windows and transomed door frames, although the doors

themselves are replacements. According to the 1909 Sanborn map, the original porch was one story and divided.



**History:** This duplex was built in 1904 for Alexander McLaughlin, an electrician, who bought the lot from the Altoona Suburban Home Company for \$400 the previous year. The 1904-05 city directory lists McLaughlin's address as "Logan Avenue, 3 e. of Whittier"; the two houses between this property and Whittier Avenue at

Fig. 6.40 Alexander and Mary McLaughlin House, 210-12 Logan Blvd., Llyswen.



that time were Nos. 218 and 216. McLaughlin sold the duplex to Holmes Ertley, a traveling salesman, for \$5,100 in 1920, apparently as an investment property. Augustus Griebel, a salesman-turned-grocer, bought it from Ertley in 1923 for \$8,500, but continued to reside on 3rd Avenue. Griebel sold it in 1926 to mortgage and insurance broker Louis Leopold, whose home was at 204 Logan Blvd. In the tight economy of the Depression years, Leopold chose to deed the duplex back to the bank holding the mortgage on it. Dolly Kennedy, who rented No. 212 during the 1940s, remembers going to the bank to pay her rent. Ella and Rose Port bought the duplex as investment property in 1948 for \$12,000. Rose and her husband, Samuel, who was a frozen foods wholesaler, lived on Aldrich Avenue in the newer section of Llyswen east of Logan Boulevard. In 1951 Yesmene Jacobs, a widow, bought the duplex and lived at No. 212 with her son, George, a clerk for the PRR, until 1964, when she sold it for \$17,500.

Sources: Maps: 1909, 1920, 1932, 1951. City directories. Tax records. Deed books: 143/33, 279/140, 307/652, 347/432, 429/519, 581/331,633/465, 636/150, 819/675, 996/256, 1076/938. Interview: Dolly Kennedy Miragliotta, 409 Logan Blvd., July 23, 1989.

Llyswen Station  
218 Logan Blvd.

Built 1895-96  
Architects: Michael  
and Louis Beezer

Description: This romantic wood-frame cottage has a veneer of irregularly coursed river stone on the first story, with wood shingles above. The complex roof is side-gabled but drops to a hipped roof over the porte cochere, and rises to a steep pyramidal peak over the prominent front dormer, which in turn has its own hipped attic dormer. Paired knee-brace brackets decorate the eaves of the main

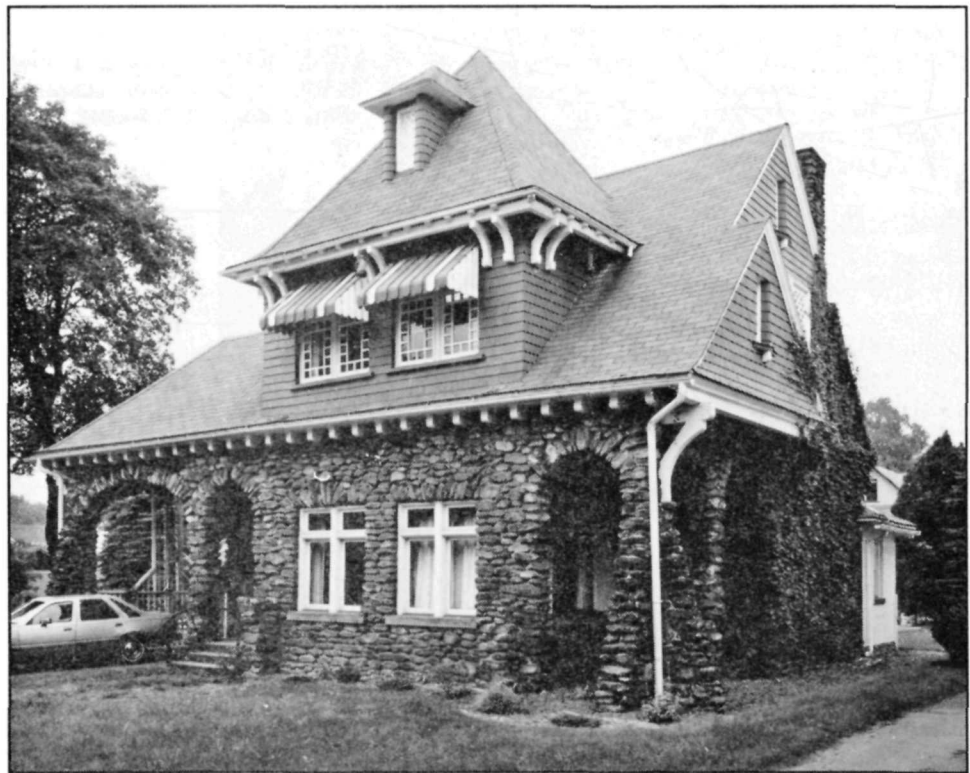


Fig. 6.41 Llyswen Station, 218 Logan Blvd., Llyswen.

dormer on either side of two double casements, each with small square lights outlining a larger pane of glass. Decoratively exposed rafters accent the first-story eaves, along with large knee-brace brackets at either end of the roof line. The front of the building has two round arches. One marks the entry; the other provides symmetry and visual interest. The more elliptical arches of the porte cochere end in battered stone pillars that flare to buttresses. The stone pillar at the northeast corner of the building repeats the effect. Original double casements on the facade have cut-stone sills and small rectangular lights over the larger main lights. The unusual entry beneath the porte cochere is a multi-light door incorporated into a wide pointed arch of many separate lights, the whole one large decorative window.

History: Begun in 1895 and completed in 1896 by the Altoona Suburban Home Company and therefore one of the first buildings on the Llyswen plot, this was the original Llyswen passenger station on the



Altoona and Logan Valley Electric Railway between Altoona and Lakemont Park. The distinctive image of this quaint Beezer Brothers design was a prominent feature of advertisements for the suburb that stressed the healthful and aesthetic advantages of suburban living, made so convenient by the streetcars that passed every fifteen minutes. Patrick W. Finn, whose firm specialized in architectural stone work, was the contractor for the building. In 1903, the development company sold the Llyswen station for \$2,000 to John Currie, foreman of the PRR's roundhouse No. 1, and his wife, Mary. The Curries converted the stone building into a residence and lived there for ten years. The station's function, meanwhile, was supplanted by small wood shed-roofed platforms at frequent intervals along the tracks, which ran down the center of present Logan Boulevard. Attorney Charles Kurtz bought the house in 1913 for \$3,600. In 1921 he and his wife sold it to Dr. Augustus Kech, who lived there with his wife, Edna, for many years. The Kech's sold the property to another doctor in 1945, and for most of the 1950s it belonged to an interior decorator. It is not clear to what extent either the doctors or the decorator kept an office in the house. Throughout the 1960-70s it was the office of Dr. Irvan Boucher, who lived on Aldrich Avenue. Since 1985 the former station has been an insurance agency. In summer 1989 the back yard was converted to paved parking.

Sources: Maps: 1909, 1920, 1932, 1951. City directories. Tax records. Illustrated Altoona, 4. Beezer Brothers' catalogs: 1894, 1897, 1899. Altoona Suburban Home Company ledgers and board minutes. Deed books: 143/281, 221/632, 221/636, 291/500, 396/519, 396/521, 413/679, 413/681, 503/38, 548/300, 548/303, 577/481, 623/79,665/167, 760/312, 1040/540, 1059/719, 1078/147, 1095/752, 1117/57, 1166/549.

Edward H. Bowers  
House  
302 Logan Blvd.

Built 1913

Description: The Llyswen vocabulary of yellow brick and painted wood shingles has many expressions. This is perhaps its most self-consciously Neoclassical manifestation. The full front porch has grouped Doric columns on stone piers linked by elaborate balustrades, dentil trim at the cornice, and a central pediment announcing the entry. Tall pilasters frame the equally tall front



Fig. 6.42 Edward H. Bowers House, 302 Logan Blvd., Llyswen.

door with its large rectangular light. Cottage windows on each side of the symmetrical facade are large square lights topped by bevelled-glass transoms under segmental arches. The two front windows on the second story are modern replacements, connected by a wide, plain frieze that encircles the house under the projecting eaves, which are further punctuated by simple modillions. A hipped dormer projects

forward from the peak of the hipped roof, echoing the lines of the pediment over the porch stairs. Small paired columns and pilasters frame the band of windows in the dormer. In relation to the boxy proportions of the house, the tall, slender chimney on the north facade is unusually fine. Detailing on the interior is far more elaborate, from heavily carved and panelled woodwork to stained-glass windows, a colonnade of ornate Corinthian columns, and a large romantic mural in the front parlor, painted on the wall by the home's original owner, its gilded wood frame nailed in place.

History: Andrew J. Engle, Sr., proprietor of the Engle Hotel on 10th Avenue, traded this lot in 1911 to a sign painter named Edward H. Bowers in exchange for Llyswen lot 5, block 9. The house first appears on tax records in Bowers' name in 1913. Bowers, who was single, was probably something more than a mere sign painter, if the painting he created on the parlor wall is reliable testimony. He sold his home for \$6,000 in 1919 to Fred J. Albright, president of Rose Hill Cemetery Company and vice president of Hinman Brothers produce wholesalers, and his wife, Lillian. She died in 1958, and after his death a year later the heirs sold the property to a local lawyer for \$10,000. The current owners bought it in 1984.

Sources: Maps: 1920, 1932, 1951. City directories. Tax records. Deed books: 110/564, 202/182, 265/514, 300/498, 300/500, 780/428, 902/451, 1102/392.

Louis Beezer House  
306 Logan Blvd.

Built 1895

Architects: Michael and Louis Beezer

Description: This side-gable, two-and-a-half-story, brick and shingle house was originally the mirror image of the house at 308 Logan Blvd.\*, the only external difference being that the brick veneer on this house was red instead of yellow. The once-recessed front porch is now enclosed as a foyer, and a full porch extends over what was the terrace. The bay window at the entry was brought forward with the new addition, as were the porch rails and columns, but an elliptical window on the south gable end has been removed. Some of the original rainspouting complete with fanciful gargoyles remains, and this house retains the decorative hip knobs on the crests of the dormers, as well as most of the original interior moldings.



Fig. 6.43 Louis Beezer House, 306 Logan Blvd., Llyswen.

History: When Louis and Michael J. Beezer lost their homes at 306 and 308 Logan Ave. to creditors in 1900, this house went to Mary Milliken of Hollidaysburg, who sold it to Charles Snowberger, a molder, in 1903 for \$3,000. Snowberger sold it for a good profit two years later to Harry Metzgar, another



Fig. 6.44 Gargoyle detail, Louis Beezer House, 306 Logan Blvd., Llyswen.

molder. Metzgar also acquired the southwest half of the neighboring lot, and sold the entire parcel to William R. Ramsey in 1921 for \$8,000. In 1919 Ramsey was one of the proprietors of the Altoona Brewing Company. By 1925 he was president and treasurer of a business called Life Staff Products Company. Jeanette Silverman acquired the house in 1924 just prior to her marriage to Nathan S. Freedman, who with his brother, Charles, operated the Children's Specialty Shop. Charles also lived with the couple. In 1942, Nicolas Scardino, a foreman at Puritan Knitting Mills, and his wife, Angelina, bought the property from the bank that foreclosed on the Freedmans in 1935. The Scardinos made it their home for nearly twenty-two years. The house has changed hands six times since the Scardinos sold it in 1964. Through the 1970s it had resident owners, but for ten years it has been used primarily as a rental property.

Sources: Maps: 1909, 1920, 1932, 1951. City directories. Tax records. Beezer Brothers' catalogs: 1897, 1899. Deed books: 106/503, 146/182, 162/308, 158/395, 205/16, 205/176, 289/650, 305/392, 318/146, 426/379, 473/198,

821/477, 891/85, 1001/108, 1033/133, 1041/673, 1119/846.

Michael J. Beezer House  
308 Logan Blvd.

Built 1895

Architects: Michael and Louis Beezer

Description: Because this house and its mirror image at 306 Logan Blvd.\* were the homes and offices of architects, and therefore "models" of a professional level of design expertise, these residences together represent conformity to a suburban ideal of rich, historically laden ornamentation creatively selected from a conservative vocabulary and applied according to a rigid grammar of "good taste." The historical model is English, in the spirit of the late Victorian gentrification of rural medieval cottages. This two-and-one-half-story Queen Anne cottage has a steeply pitched side gable roof with three identical hipped dormers at the attic story. A second-story hipped dormer with modillions and diamond-paned casement windows is set into the roof with a balcony and simple balustrade. The prominent front gable with token cornice returns completes the ell of the second-floor plan. Shingles on the face of the gable curve into a triple window divided by Doric pilasters, with a curved wood sill beneath. At the peak of the gable is an elaborate elliptical window. The variety of windows, in fact, is the home's chief ornament.

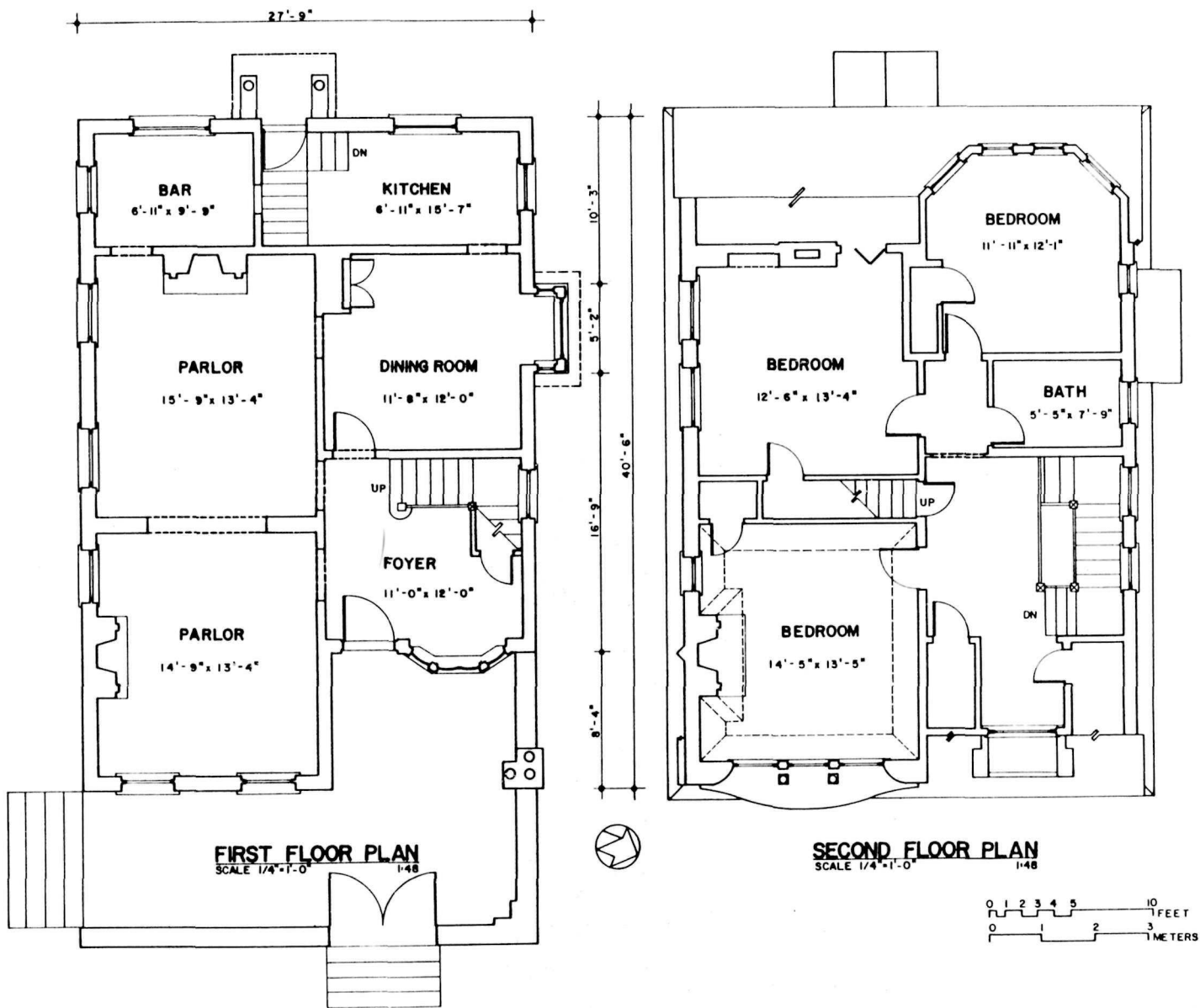


Fig. 6.45 First- and second-floor plans, Michael J. Beezer House, 308 Logan Blvd., Lyswen. Drawn by David A. Macharola.

The north gable end has a Palladian window at the peak, cathedral windows crowned by wide entablatures at the second story, a finer elliptical window than the one on the front of the house, and a 6'-tall, arched stained-glass "art" window illuminating the stairwell. The first story has a brick veneer, and a broad frieze of swags, garlands, and dentil trim encircles the house at the cornice line. The entry, set back under the roofline at the northeast corner, has a leaded-glass bay window and leaded glass in the sidelights and transom window. A small terrace extends across the front of the house. Much of the original interior is intact, including the custom woodwork of the stairwell, the wide window moldings downstairs, and the mantels of the three fireplaces (although whatever extended above the mantel in the main parlor has been removed). The original glazed tile remains in the fireplace surrounds but not in the hearths, except in the master bedroom. At some point, probably during the 1940s, interior doorways were modernized into plaster-finished arches. The original plan had three rooms and a hallway on each floor, with an upstairs bath. The original back porch has been enclosed and made over into a kitchen.

**History:** In 1895 architects Louis and Michael J. Beezer, twin brothers, built mirror-image houses side by side on Logan Avenue, at Nos. 306 and 308. The brothers lived at these addresses until 1899. They also designed the passenger station at 218 Logan Blvd.\* for the Altoona Suburban Home Company, and from the way their cottages were featured both in catalogs of their work and promotions for Llyswen, it is clear that the homes were intended as models for the new suburb as well as advertisements of the brothers' designing skills.

In 1900 both houses were sold by the county sheriff to satisfy unfulfilled mortgages. Patrick William Finn, the contractor who probably built "The Cottages," as they came to be known, acquired the house at 308 Logan Ave. from the Beezers' creditors in 1903, several years after he had moved to his own grand house at Ant Hills near Hollidaysburg. The 1904-05 city directory shows John T. Finn, general contractor and owner of Peerless Manufacturing Company, and Thomas Finn, an invalid, residing at this address. Jane, Nellie and Katherine Finn, and James B. Finn, bookkeeper for P. W. Finn, are listed as boarders. When Patrick Finn went bankrupt in 1910, the house changed hands twice before it was purchased in 1912 for \$5,000 by Rebecca J. Potts, wife of Cyrus Potts, agency superintendent for Mutual Life Insurance Company of New York. He also owned the Llyswen Motor Car Company at 96 Logan Ave. When Rebecca Potts died in 1926, her husband and daughter Stella transferred the property to another daughter, Edna, wife of Ralph E. Bell, listed as an inspector in the 1930 directory. Ralph remarried after Edna's death in 1935 and continued to live in this house until

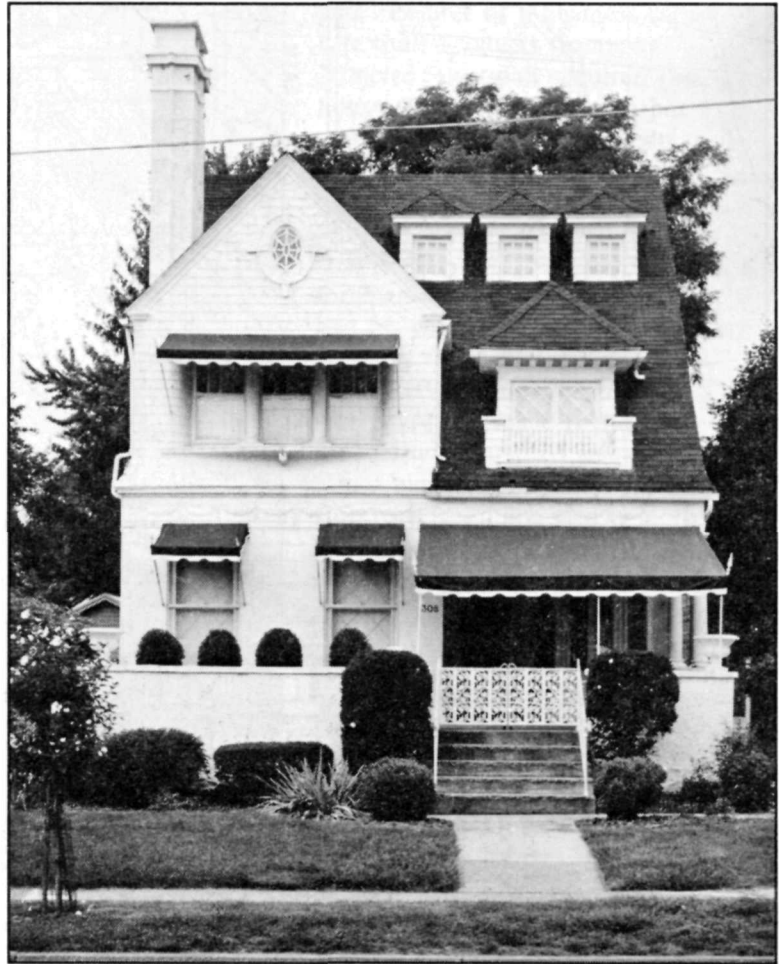


Fig. 6.46 Michael J. Beezer House, 308 Logan Blvd., Llyswen.



1944, when he sold it to Lewis Earl Savage, district plant engineer for Bell Telephone Company. Savage had previously owned the house at 317 Coleridge Ave. The present owners, who bought the house in 1970 from Enola Savage, Lewis Earl's widow, have done much to preserve what original character of the house remains. They have taken special care to preserve the many unique windows, which are almost completely intact.

Sources: Maps: 1909, 1920, 1932, 1951. City directories. Tax records. Deed books: 106/503, 125/542, 141/227, 196/54, 197/236, 201/548, 207/440, 347/350, 444/301, 474/87, 492/259, 906/371, 976/167. Mortgage books: 66/122, 49/398. Beezer Brothers' catalogs: 1897, 1899.

Howard and Effie  
Fleck House  
312 Logan Blvd.

Built 1907

Description: This two-and-a-half-story, wood-frame house is an atypical brick-veneered example of a signature type in Llyswen: a basic foursquare overlaid with eclectic Queen Anne elaborations. Fanciful touches, like the two-story tower with bell-shaped roof and finial, and cresting and knobs on the hipped roof and gabled dormers, are balanced by the pared down classicism of the columned porch and



Fig. 6.47 Howard and Effie Fleck House, 312 Logan Blvd., Llyswen.

Palladian window dormer. The brick surface is unelaborated, in typical foursquare fashion, except for the oval stained-glass window on the second story. Both the sidelighted front door and the front parlor window have leaded-glass transom windows. Several of the bowed panes in the tower windows have been replaced by plexiglass. On the interior, the stairway is original, but the floor plan has been altered extensively.

History: Howard Fleck, a buyer for the W. F. Gable & Company department store, built this house in 1907. The piecemeal effect of decorative combinations, like the front parlor's juxtaposition of lacy leaded glass and massive stone fireplace, and the mix of stained-glass patterns and styles throughout the house, suggest that it was builder-designed but finished with client-selected details and fixtures. The Flecks sold their home for \$6,500 in 1917 to Mary Pierce, wife of real estate broker Albert L. Pierce. She also acquired the lot directly behind the house (lot 15, block 10) a month later, and the neighboring lot and house at 314 Logan Blvd. the following year. Pierce only retained portions of these properties adjacent to her original lot, and sold the house and enlarged property in 1929 to florist and landscape gardener Eugene S. Meyers for \$11,000. Meyers lost the house to creditors in 1939. It was a

rental property for a few years, and changed hands several times before Victor and Happiness Notopoulos acquired it in 1950 and made it their home for fifteen years. He was the manager of the Capitol Theater in Altoona. Antique dealers David and Margaret Donnelly bought the property in 1960 for \$12,700, then sold it three years later but continued to live in it until 1970, when it was sold to Alfred Bernardin, an administrator for the Blair County Mental Health Center. The Donnellys then repurchased the house in late 1970 and occupied it for six more years. They are probably responsible for much of the modern interior alterations. In the mid 1980s this was the home of the mayor of Altoona, David Jannetta, and his wife, Heather. The present owners bought the house in 1988.

Sources: Maps: 1909, 1920, 1932, 1951. City directories. Tax records. Deed books: 164/312, 247/674, 254/98, 249/546, 389/300, 449/47, 507/61, 574/81, 618/100, 838/498, 876/454, 900/182, 911/489, 992/808, 1109/167, 1155/459. Interview: Philip and Sandra Fry, 312 Logan Blvd., July 22, 1989.

W. Glenn and Doris Henninger House  
317 Morningside Dr.

Built 1941-51

Description: Owner-built down to its handcrafted windows and latches, this highly individualistic "cottage" has steeply pitched intersecting gables with cornice returns on the front gable, and a decidedly rustic character, enhanced by rough wood shingles and the prominent brick and fieldstone chimney centered in the street face of the ell. Shed bump-outs in the ell enlarge the floor plan to a nearly full second story. A minor front-facing gable in the middle of the upstairs, marking the single room from which the second floor later expanded, is now obscured by a porch accessible via a metal stairway from the front walk. The owner added a one-story two-car garage and workshop in 1965.



Fig. 6.48 W. Glenn and Doris Henninger House, 317 Morningside Dr., Llyswen.

History: Glenn Henninger is a carpenter, born in 1912 in what he calls a "shanty," now the garage, behind 314 Wordsworth Ave., the house his carpenter father, William, was building for his family. In 1941, a lean year for building materials in Altoona, Glenn and Doris, his wife of five years, began constructing this house on Morningside Drive on a lot that belonged to an uncle. The original house had two rooms--one upstairs and one down--over a cellar Henninger dug

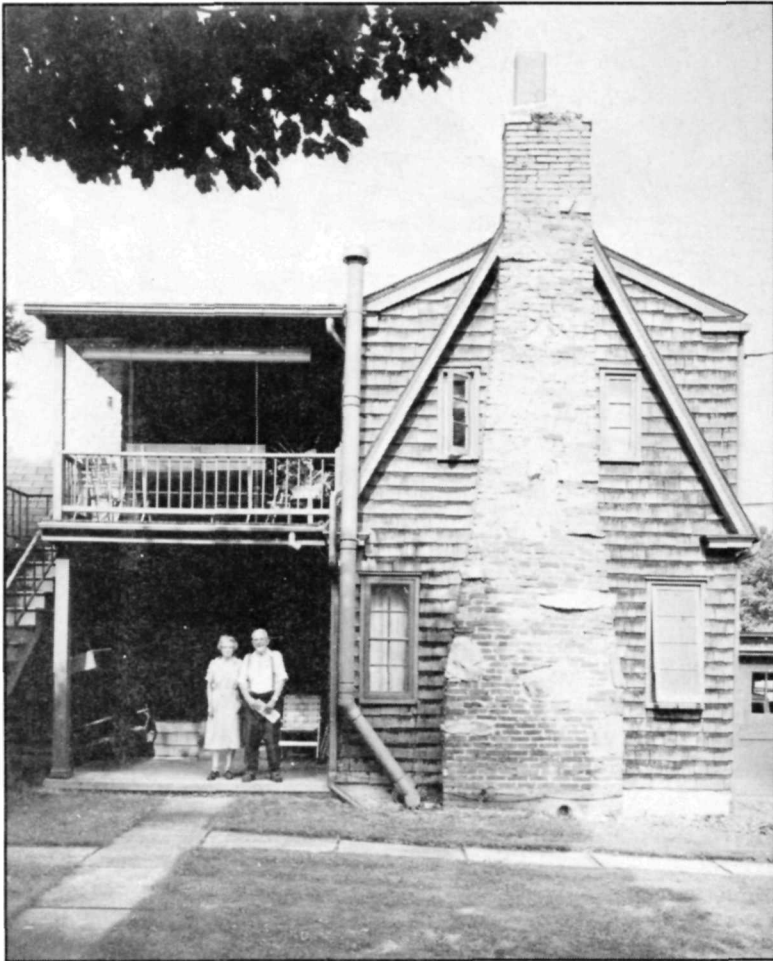


Fig. 6.49 Glenn and Doris Henninger on the porch of their house at 317 Morningside Dr., Llyswen.

himself with a pick, shovel, and wheelbarrow to cart the dirt into the back yard. It was a plank house, built out of recycled boxcar siding with the bolts burned off, purchased from the railroad for \$26 a load, and supplemented by whatever other materials were available from Modern Cabinet Company, the woodworking and cabinetry shop Glenn started in a two-car garage on Burns Avenue. He worked on the house in his spare time, and they were able to move in as soon as the roof was completed, late in 1941 or early in '42. At that time, the only house on Morningside between theirs and Mill Run was the Engelmans's at No. 318\*. The Henninger house does not appear on tax records until 1943. Most of the neighbors, they remember, were less than pleased to have what they considered a shanty on their street. That original incarnation of the house never had a "finished" look; instead, it seemed to be eternally under construction. The original two rooms grew to six, including three bedrooms for their growing family, and the age of each new room addition was disguised by the wood shingle finish Mr. Henninger chose because "I could do 'em a few at a time." He

custom-made all the windows at "the shop," as well as the doors, latches, and flooring, and built most of the furniture. The whimsical chimney he made of flawed bricks and "found" stones from Lock Mountain. The house was pretty much in its present form by 1951, the year the Henningers finally acquired the lot. After their children left home, they converted the upstairs into a separate rental apartment and moved back into the original downstairs of the compact house.

Sources: City directories. Tax records. Deeds: 264/639, 388/249, 520/168, 645/89, 645/91. Interview: W. Glenn and Doris Henninger, 317 Morningside Drive, August 11, 1989.

#### Emil A. and Geraldine Engelman House 318 Morningside Drive

Built 1939

Description: This compact, one-and-a-half-story, side-gabled cottage is clad in wide weatherboard siding, with asphalt shingles in the large shed dormer. A shed roof projects over a nondescript porch with simple, round columns. The front door and windows are modern. The most remarkable feature of this house is its well-tended shrubbery and the variety of artful plantings in the back and side yards.

History: Landscape gardener Emil A. Engelman, son of Pennsylvania Railroad head gardener Emil Engelman, built this house for himself and his wife, Geraldine, in 1939, with second-hand materials scavenged in part from the demolition of the PRR's Cricket Club. The lot, which he inherited, had long been part of his father's landscape nursery. Emil A.'s will conveyed the house to his daughter in 1988.



Fig. 6.50 Emil A. and Geraldine Engelman House, 318 Morningside Dr., Llyswen.

Sources: Map: 1951. City directories. Tax records.

Deed books: 149/17, 149/20, 286/230, 286/232, 444/533, 1164/324. Interview: Geraldine Engelman, 318 Morningside Dr., June 18, 1989.

### Engelman Outbuilding 320 Morningside Dr.

Built ca. 1923

Description: Because this has always been a utilitarian building, its form and function may well have changed over the years, but such transformations are difficult to trace. At present, it serves as a storage space and workshop with an upstairs apartment. The shallow pitched roof has gables on the north and south sides with a moderate overhang, and extends on the east side to incorporate an obvious addition to the upstairs apartment. Windows on the north facade are random, and of assorted types. A tall, wide double door with six-light windows, probably original, is too narrow to accommodate a modern automobile. A panelled door leads to an office, and exterior stairs on the east end of the building lead to the apartment entrance. The downstairs is clad in wide weatherboard, with asphalt shingles above.

History: Alphonse Engelman acquired this lot from the Altoona Suburban Home Company in 1919, but his brother, Emil, was responsible for the construction of this building, perhaps as early as 1923, when he was assessed for a "small shanty" on half of lot 10, block 20, valued at \$250. Emil owned several lots here after 1928 and ran the property as a private nursery, raising plants for his landscape business. In 1930, as a nonresident, he was assessed for three lots and a "small dwelling," valued at \$400. That designation, referring to the same three lots, changed in 1938 to a "stucco garage," with a value of \$600. Keeping in mind the occasional imprecision of tax records especially in regard to the function of outbuildings, which often changed, these three terms may or may not all describe the same building,





Fig. 6.51 Engleman Outbuilding, 320 Morningside Dr., Llyswen.

whose upstairs may well have been stuccoed at one time. Engelman kept several other small buildings on these lots in support of his business, including two or three greenhouses. His great-grandson, whose flower garden lies between this building and Morningside Drive, now lives in the upstairs apartment and stores his tools and equipment below. The main space behind the double door serves as a workshop.

Sources: Sanborns: 1932, 1951. City directories. Tax records. Deed books:

278/297, 372/547. Will books: 57/316, 208/7. Interview: Geraldine Engelman, 318 Morningside Dr., June 18, 1989.

#### Royal Weidner and Agnes Kane House 211 Ruskin Dr.

Built ca. 1915-17

Description: The Craftsman aesthetic combines with a basic Dutch Colonial revival form in this two-story, cross-gambrel house. False half-timbering and the simple brick columns and plain wood rail of the wide, low porch are definitive Craftsman expressions, as are the small double windows flanking the side chimney. The lot slopes away to the rear, allowing a garage underneath the house. A rear porch was converted into a sunroom that takes advantage of the view of Brush Mountain to the east. The house has a stone foundation, brick veneer on the first story, and stucco infill above.

History: In 1915 Royal Weidner Kane, a molder for the PRR, purchased a portion of Llyswen lot 17, block 17 on the Duncansville Road for \$350 from a grocer named Solomon Dembert. At that time Kane still resided with the large and extended family occupying his father's big house at 100 Holmes Ave. By 1917, however, he and his wife, Agnes, were taxed for a house and partial lot with an assessed value of \$950. The Kanes sold their home in 1956 to Walter F. Kuhn, a salesman, and his wife, Charlotte, for \$10,000. The present owners acquired it from the Kuhns in 1962.

Sources: Maps: 1920, 1932, 1951. City directories. Tax records. Deed books: 143/382, 143/387, 211/212, 229/586, 234/589, 242/404, 281/566, 282/58, 285/544, 320/378, 374/99, 374/101, 562/232, 562/234, 730/264, 799/603.





Fig. 6.52 Royal Weidner and Agnes Kane House, 211 Ruskin Dr., Llyswen.



Fig. 6.53 John C. and Catherine Jackson House, 215 Ruskin Dr., Llyswen.

John C. and  
Catherine Jackson  
House  
215 Ruskin Drive

Built ca. 1904-06

Description: The only brick-veneered version of a type known locally as the "Llyswen cottage," this two-and-a-half-story house has a cross-gable roof with cornice returns at the side gables, and a front gable faced with scalloped wood shingles surmounting a two-story bay. Pierced brackets decorate the overhang at the ends of the closed gable above the bay, and rough brick "quoins" accent the vertical lines of the bay's intersecting planes. The brick veneer is high quality, with smooth, high-fired red brick butter-jointed with red-stained mortar for a uniform visual effect. The hip-roofed front porch has tapered round columns and carved brackets where its cornice meets the facade. The porch railing is modern. All of the original windows on the front and sides of the house have segmental brick arches. The front door has the same arch and a transom.

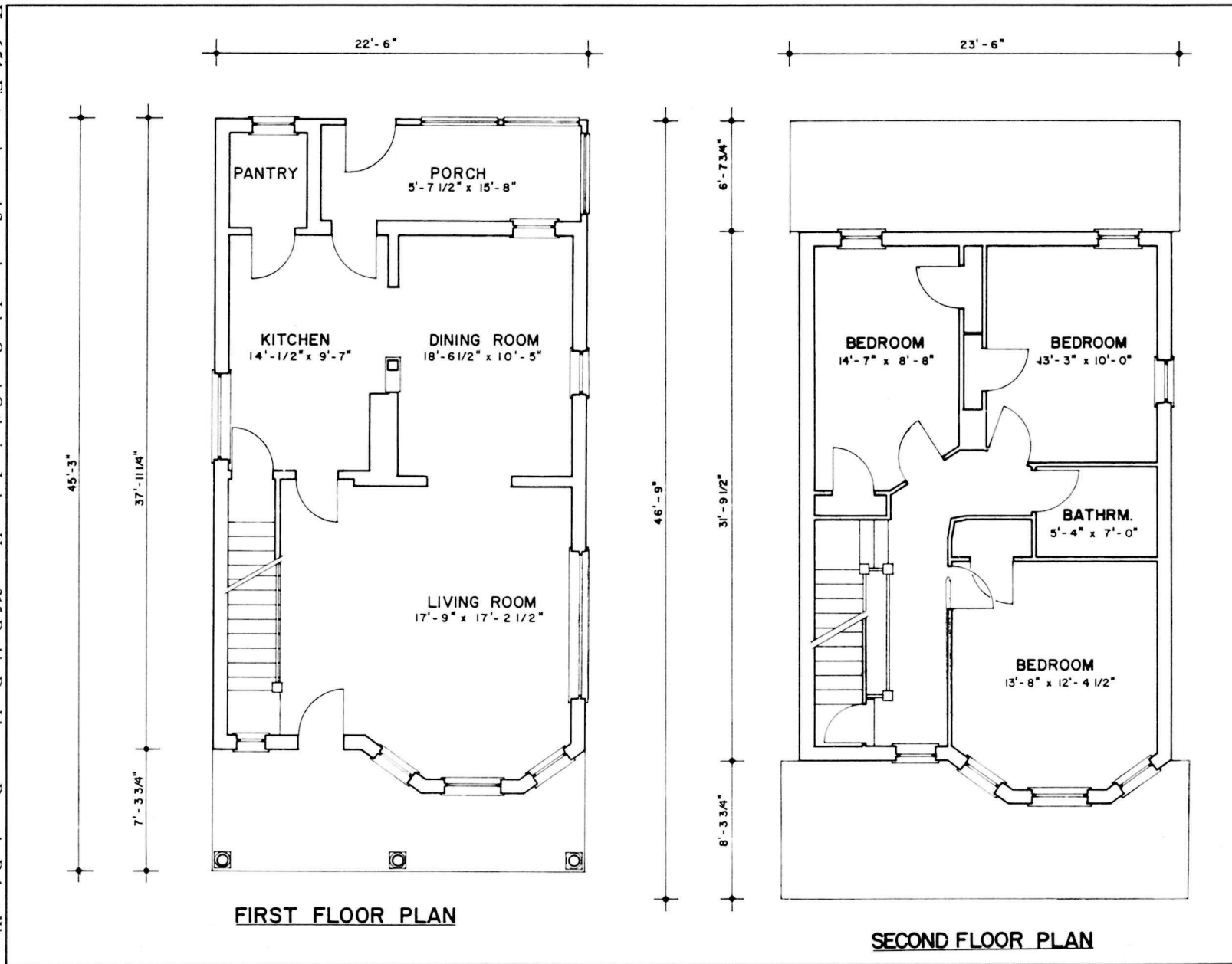


Fig. 654 First- and second-floor plans, John C. and Catherine Jackson House, 215 Ruskin Dr., Lyswen. Drawn by Robert W. Anthony.

The house at 221 Ruskin Dr. is a virtually unaltered all-wood version of this same "Llyswen cottage," of which six or seven other examples exist in the neighborhood. All were built between 1903 and 1908. Several of them share millwork identical to that found in houses built during the same period by P. W. Finn at 312\* and 314 Coleridge Ave.

**History:** This house was built for John C. and Catherine Jackson between 1904, when the city directory lists John as a laborer boarding in his father's house on Beale Avenue, and 1906, when tax records identify him as a molder with a house and lot at this address. Jackson purchased the lot from the Altoona Suburban Home Company in 1903 for \$350. The Jacksons sold the house in 1914 for \$3,000 to John C. Hanley, a tender builder (later a boilermaker) for the PRR. The 1920 Sanborn map, the earliest of this section of Llyswen, shows a two-story wood-frame stable behind the house, a rare amenity in Llyswen. By 1932 it was replaced by a one-story garage. John and Laura Hanley made this house their home for thirty-seven years. In 1951 they sold it to Scott Geesey, a teacher at Altoona Senior High School, and his wife, Noribel. The Geeseys sold it in 1975 for \$18,500. The current owners, who bought the property in 1976, have recently listed it for sale.

**Sources:** Maps: 1920, 1932, 1951. City directories. Tax records. Deed books: 145/96, 227/674, 337/588, 337/590, 651/339, 971/549, 982/29.

### Baker Elementary School

Ward Avenue at Coleridge Avenue

Built 1906-07

**Description:** The original Baker School was a wood-frame, two-story building with a hipped roof, red-brick veneer, and a three-story bell tower with a pyramidal roof. Open arches on the top floor of the tower echo the arched main entry at its base. An early addition doubled the size of the school with a mirror-image west wing five bays wide and eight bays deep, with two large classrooms per floor. A 1959 steel-frame addition to the rear of the early building combined red brick with concrete in a typical late-modern institutional style: a flat roof and emphatically contrasting horizontal bands of windows and brick. The facilities added in 1989 are housed in a three-story, steel-frame building also finished in red brick, with contrasting bands of concrete intended to visually relate the addition to the earlier parts of the building.

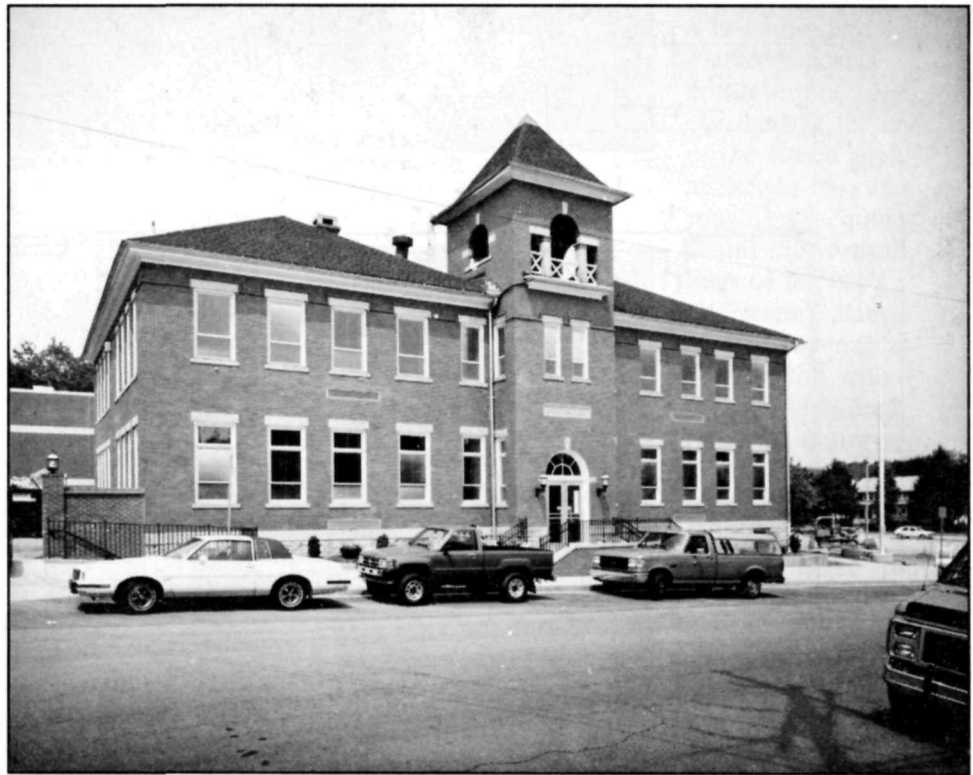


Fig. 6.55 Baker Elementary School, Ward Avenue at Coleridge Avenue.

**History:** Baker School was completed in 1907 on land donated by the Baker estate. A \$10,000 addition in 1915 increased its size from four classrooms to eight. In 1957 the Altoona School District commissioned the architectural firm Hunter, Campbell and Rea to design an eight-room addition to the rear of the original building. Six classrooms, an auditorium, and an office were completed in 1959 at a cost of \$385,000. For a year and a half during the construction, the fourth-grade class met in the Ward Avenue Presbyterian Church across the street from the school. A second addition, designed by Richard Karcher of the local firm Hayes, Large, Suckling, Fruth and Wedge, and constructed by Hench Brothers Inc., was completed in August 1989. The \$2.09 million project included a thorough renovation of the original Baker School, removal of asbestos floor tiles, provision for bus access to the Ward Avenue entrance, and demolition of a number of buildings between the school and Logan Boulevard to make way for an expanded parking lot and playground. Llyswen residents lobbied the school board vigorously to ensure that the school would expand back toward Landis Avenue or over to Logan rather than encroach upon residential areas. The new addition included a kitchen and a large multi-purpose room that serves as auditorium, gymnasium and cafeteria, and the auditorium in the 1959 addition was converted into a library. The school can accommodate up to 400 students.

**Sources:** Maps: 1909, 1930, 1932, 1951. Tax records. *Altoona Mirror*: November 28, 1958; December 23, 1958; May 6, 1959; May 13, 1959; June 13, 1959; May 21, 1987; June 16, 1987; February 17, 1988; May 11, 1988; June 6, 1988; October 7, 1988; January 30, 1989; August 5, 1989. Early photo in the collection of Anna Leopold, 101 Halleck Pl.

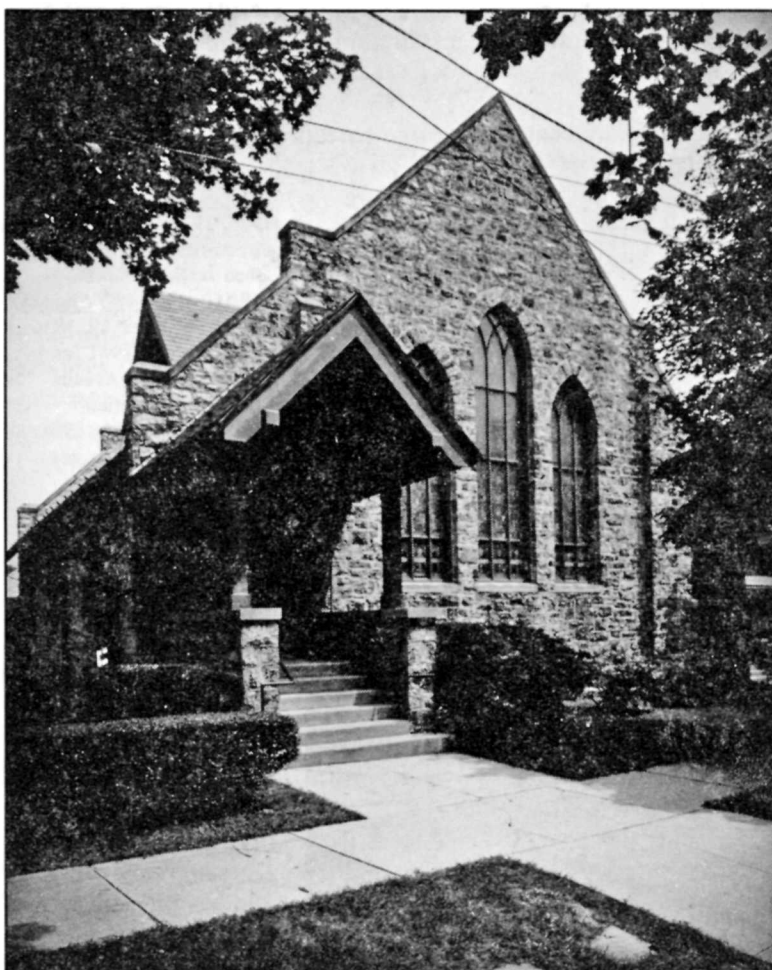


Fig. 6.56 Ward Avenue United Presbyterian Church, corner Ward and Coleridge avenues.

#### Ward Avenue United Presbyterian Church

Northeast corner of Ward and Coleridge avenues

Built 1913

**Description:** The scale, form, and finish of this small wood-frame church evoke a decidedly English village context. Primary architectural elements of this evocation are the steeply pitched slate roof, parapeted gable ends, and a veneer of rock-faced limestone ashlar laid in random courses, along with the building's squat, nearly square form. Ecclesiastical signage is understated but unmistakable. A tripartite arrangement of Gothic, stained-glass windows stretches toward the high peak of each parapet wall, flanked by narrow buttresses whose positions are expressed by stepped interruptions in the parapet slopes. Steps, sills, and parapet copings are cut limestone. The sanctuary occupies the entire first floor of the building; smaller meeting rooms, offices, and facilities are in the full basement. The sanctuary is further illuminated by three double stained-glass windows and a stained-glass dormer light on



the Ward Avenue facade. Worshippers enter via a varnished wood double door with stained-glass lights and fanlight, protected by a rustic, exposed-timber porch facing Coleridge Avenue. The rustic tone carries over into the sanctuary's dark wood finishes and heavy ceiling brackets.

**History:** In 1904, less than a year after voting to investigate the need for a mission in South Altoona, the Huntingdon Presbytery established a Union Sunday School at Lakemont Terrace. The presbytery officially recognized the South Altoona Presbyterian Church on October 19, 1906, and appointed W. P. Benedict as pastor. The new congregation's sanctuary was a wood-frame chapel on Ridge Avenue above Ruskin Drive, a site donated by Anna Baker on behalf of the Baker estate. The church purchased the Llyswen site for \$1,500 in 1907 from PRR car repairer James M. Curtis of Eldorado Station; he had obtained it a year earlier for \$750 from Stephen Martin and Charles Gearhart, listed in the 1906-07 city directory as "Martin & Gearhart, grocers, 101 Ward Avenue." They purchased the lot from the Altoona Suburban Home Company in March 1906. The 1906 directory also indicates that Stephen and Annie Martin lived on Ward Avenue near Logan Avenue, possibly above or behind the store building at the back of the present lot. The 1909 Sanborn map identifies a one-and-a-half story wood-frame building with a small porch facing Ward Avenue as Ward Avenue Presbyterian Church, suggesting a revision of local accounts of the church's history, which hold that the chapel on Ridge Avenue was moved to the Llyswen site in 1911. It is possible that the store and the transplanted chapel were incorporated to form one building large enough for the congregation's temporary needs. The cornerstone for the present building was laid in 1912; the completed church was dedicated on March 30, 1913. Assessed valued of the new building was \$4,000. The church purchased the house at 101 Coleridge\* as a manse from Percy Rich in 1919. In 1924 the congregation celebrated the installation of an impressive Estey pipe organ.

The South Altoona Presbyterian Church did not officially change its name to reflect its new location until 1948. The present name was adopted in 1968.



Fig. 6.57 Joseph and Emma May Hoover House, 203-1/2 Whittier Ave., Llyswen.

**Sources:** Maps: 1909, 1920, 1932, 1951. City directories. Tax records. Deed books: 166/426, 167/660, 178/146. Altoona Mirror: October 19, 1936; December 20, 1947 (early photos). Ward Avenue United Presbyterian Church directories: 1974, 1988. Interview: James Spence, 314 Coleridge Ave., July 18, 1989.

**Joseph and Emma May Hoover House**  
203-1/2 West Whittier Ave.

Built 1905

**Description:** An original "Llyswen cottage," this two-and-a-half-story, wood-frame house has a cross-gable roof and narrow drop



siding. Colonial Revival elements include the shingled front gable's cornice returns over a wide frieze with dentil trim, and the triple-sash window at the entry, topped by an elliptical fanlight. The original entry is now enclosed in a sunroom addition to the front of the house.

History: This house, flanked by two other residences of identical plan (Nos. 203 and 205) was built in 1905 for Joseph L. and Emma May Hoover. Joseph was a conductor for the Altoona and Logan Valley Electric Railway, and probably a friend of William McCulloch, a dispatcher for the ALVERy who sold Hoover half of his own lot in 1904 for \$250. Before 1904, McCulloch had lived at 1718 6th Ave. with A. R. Olewine, who bought the lot next to Hoover's that same year. The three houses were built at the same time, possibly by their owners; at any rate, building from the same plans probably meant substantial savings on materials and any necessary contracted labor. In 1932 Joseph transferred the deed to the house at No. 203-1/2 to his wife, apparently to protect it from his creditors. In 1956 Emma Hoover sold the house for \$4,900 to Fred and Emily Iacovetti, proprietors of Iacovetti's Restaurant at 12th Street and 7th Avenue. Fred retired to Florida in 1972, and several subsequent owners have used the house as a rental property. It also stood vacant for several years. The current owners purchased it in 1989.

Sources: Maps: 1920, 1932, 1951. City directories. Tax records. Deed books: 149/259, 151/126, 407/42, 407/46, 728/511, 936/677, 952/367, 960/138, 977/46, 1089/423, 1166/219.

Martin L. Warsing  
House  
108 Wordsworth Ave.

Built 1915

Description: A large and rather successful combination of Dutch Colonial and Craftsman stylistic features, this wide, two-story, front-gambrel house has a symmetrical facade, bevelled-wood siding, and a small, shed-roof dormer on either side. Wide, flat moldings outline the sidelighted entry and the broad, triple-sash windows flanking it, which are further divided into geometric patterns of small lights

surrounding larger central ones. This detail persists in the windows of the dormer and a projecting bay on the south side of the house, but the windows in the dormer and two more bays on the north elevation have been replaced. The deep, full front porch has battered brick pillars connected by a simple wood railing.

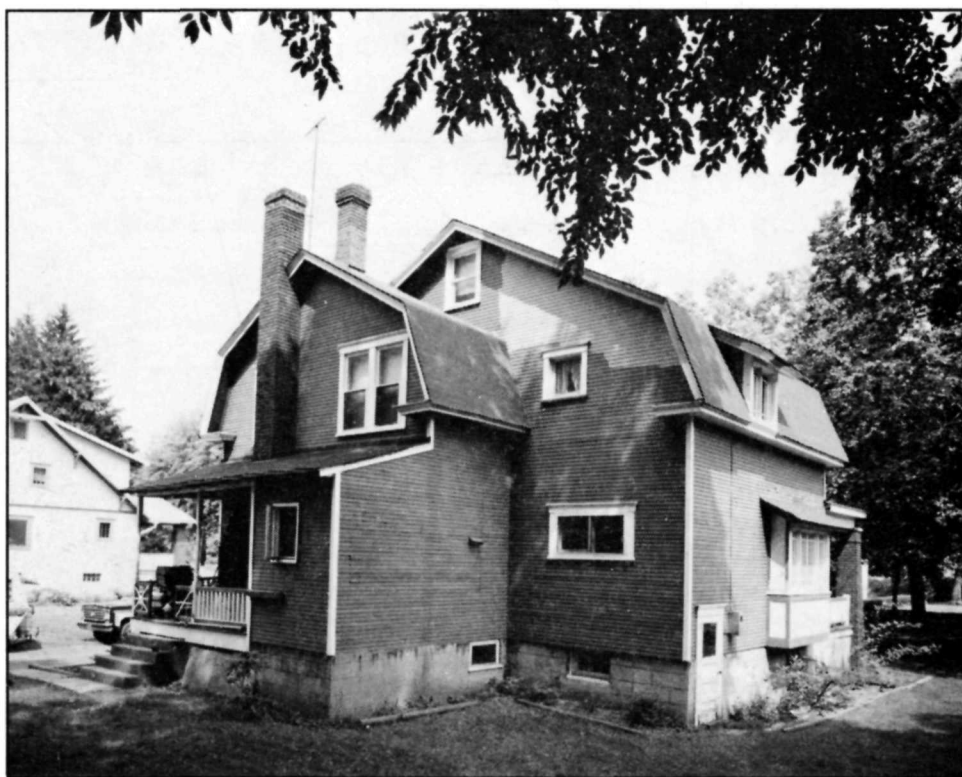


Fig. 6.58 Rear perspective, Martin L. Warsing House, 108 Wordsworth Ave., Llyswen.

History: James Spence, who was born in 1909, remembers a playground and ball field on the west side of Wordsworth Avenue in the flat area below the stretch of Holmes Avenue that was never built. It was an informal park, cleared and maintained for the children by parents in the neighborhood. Martin L. Warsing, a tinner, was first taxed for a house on this lot in the center of the old park in 1915, four years after he purchased the lot for \$400. If that building date is accurate, the park of Jim Spence's memory was short-lived. The 1914-15 city directory shows Warsing residing on "Wadsworth," a common misspelling of Wordsworth that perhaps also indicates how the word was pronounced locally. Between 1919, when Warsing sold it for \$3,400, and 1975, when it became the property of Grace United Church of Christ, the house belonged to a teller at Central Trust Company for one year, a dentist for twenty-three years, and a druggist for thirty-two years. After using it as a parsonage for several years, the church sold it to the present owners in 1986.

Sources: Maps: 1920, 1932, 1951. City directories. Tax records. Deed books: 203/354, 271/200, 273/312, 318/8, 318/10, 319/361, 408/586, 427/39; 479/79, 977/592, 1127/618. Interview: James Spence, 314 Coleridge Ave., July 18, 1989.



Fig. 6.59 Clair F. and Jean Shank House, 300 Wordsworth Ave., Llyswen.

Clair F. and Jean  
Shank House  
300 Wordsworth Ave.

Built 1966

Description: The upper level of this side-gable contemporary tri-level is clad in masonite siding; the ground level is brick-cased. The one-story north extension incorporates a secondary entry and a two-car garage with an overhead garage door. The two main rooms on the upstairs front of the house cantilever over the ground floor. The entry, recessed into the facade and sheltered by a

generous roof overhang, has double two-panel doors with contrasting molding. Window shutters are similarly decorated, and enhance the width of the already oversized front windows. The front walk leads from the entry across the front of the house to the driveway. Garages and driveways are integral to the street aspects of many of the houses of this period in Llyswen, most of which are on Wordsworth Avenue.

History: This house was built in 1966 for Clair F. and Jean Shank, who purchased both this lot and the neighboring one at 130 Wordsworth Ave. from the Baker Estates for \$2,600 early that year. In 1969,

they added a 20' x 40' swimming pool to the back yard. The present owners acquired it in 1981 for \$61,000.

Sources: City directories. Tax records. Deed books: 382/405, 537/433, 537/436, 844/426, 1019/406, 1064/241.

Walter S. and Alice  
Long House  
308 Wordsworth Ave.

Built 1926-27

Description: Wider and larger than many of the bungalows in Llyswen, this one-and-a-half-story, brick-veneered example is nonetheless fairly generic. Big, square cottage windows topped by narrow rectangular lights divided into several small panes flank a simple entry. The front-gabled, second-story dormer has weatherboard siding and a band of three double-hung sash.

Battered brick pillars support the roof over the full porch, which is tucked under the steeply pitched side-gable roof. The porch rail is a low wall of the same red brick. The house faces east on a small rise well back from the intersection of Wordsworth Avenue and Halleck Place.



Fig. 6.60 Walter S. and Alice Long House, 308 Wordsworth Ave., Llyswen.

History: Walter S. Long was pastor of the First Church of the Brethren on 5th Street when he purchased this lot for \$550 in 1913. In 1921 a small house appeared on the tax record; house and lot together were assessed a value of \$400. In 1925 Long added a garage and the tax assessment value increased to \$700. Whatever purpose that original house served, it was removed when construction began on the present house in 1926. Long was still listed as a nonresident (by 1925 he had moved on to church property), but the 1927 city directory shows him at this address, and the tax record of that year assessed him for an unfinished large house, valued at \$2,500. After his death in 1953, the house became the property of the Brethren Church and was used as a parsonage until 1988 when it was sold to the current residents.

Sources: Maps: 1932, 1951. City directories. Tax records. Deeds: 220/149, 220/510, 220/509, 222/388, 424/259, 424/257, 1162/597.

**RAILROAD CITY:  
CONCLUSION AND FURTHER RESEARCH**

In 1952 a reporter for Business Week used a description of Altoona's streetscapes to represent the consequences of being a "one-company town:"

Altoona looks like a railroad town in the worst sense of the word . . . [it] is, to put it kindly, unattractive. . . . Most of [the houses] look as if they haven't seen a coat of paint in many years, and the dirty gray of soft-coal soot has settled on all the buildings in the city.<sup>1</sup>

Another reporter saw much the same thing in 1965:

The effort to drag itself out of the pit [of railroad dependency and depression] has left scars. Narrow downtown streets, many unsightly buildings, and congested traffic conditions are monuments to a local tax rate that has deliberately been kept low. Many residential areas have a shabby look about them. Graying frame houses are clustered together along uneven cobbled streets.<sup>2</sup>

The explicit association of Altoona's "old" buildings with its history and the cause of its economic depression helps to explain the devastation wreaked by urban renewal projects of the late 1960s and 1970s on the city's center. Many historic buildings were demolished, mostly for the construction of high-rise housing, parking lots, and highways. But these efforts to remove what were considered eyesores and make the commercial district attractive and accessible by car were doomed to failure by the national trend towards suburbanization. Downtown businesses either closed completely or moved to the Pleasant Valley Shopping Center/Logan Valley Mall strip adjoining the city on the south and east. A mini-strip was created within the city itself with the demolition of all but a few PRR shop buildings and the construction of Station Mall at 9th Avenue and 17th Street. The Chamber of Commerce's latest promotional venture promises at least a partial turn away from the policy of demolition. The city is participating in the state-sponsored Main Street Manager Program, designed to draw attention and activity to the city center through preservation of existing buildings and encouragement of redevelopment that fosters historic character as a commercial asset.

Altoona's residential neighborhoods are no longer shrouded in soot and there are few remaining cobblestone streets. Unfortunately, houses continue to be torn down, often through the city's "blighted properties" program. Altoona still has a few "shabby" residential areas that are often rented as "Section 8" housing and subject to the neglect of owners and developers until it becomes easier to demolish a building than to restore and maintain it. Yet the majority of Altoona's neighborhoods reflect the pride of their residents as homeowners maintain and remodel their houses so that Altoona can still aspire to the title "City of Homes."

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<sup>1</sup>"Altoona: One-Company Town in Search of Industry," Business Week (May 10, 1952), 76-8.

<sup>2</sup>"One City's War on Poverty," Senior Scholastic 87 (December 9, 1965), 21.



The neighborhoods profiled here begin to provide a picture of what that phrase has meant at different times and places in Altoona. From the suburban upper middle class society of Llyswen to the skilled working class urban neighborhood of the Fourth Ward to the more prestigious white collar addresses next to the commercial center in the First Ward, the basis for home building was the railroad. As Chamber of Commerce publications boasted, the skilled labor pool required by the PRR insured a responsible and upstanding populace of "neither the very rich nor the very poor." The varying character of the houses built in each neighborhood reflects the different facet of this populace that each represents and hints at the fissures dividing what has been portrayed as a monolithic whole. The churches, building and loans, and fraternal organizations that these citizens founded and supported are intricately constitutive of the city's built environment and further research into their history would provide another way to map the interior contours of Altoona society.

Studies of other neighborhoods would also help fill in the story and bring to light information about Altoonans who may not have conformed to the solid middle class profile. Three places to start are in the area south of the commercial center: the blocks around Washington Avenue and 17th Street that was once known as "Jew Hill," the neighborhood around Union Avenue and 16th Street where Altoona's early black community first settled, and the area around the Orthodox and Ukranian Catholic churches along 20th street between 13th and 20th avenues, presumably once the home of an East European immigrant community. The Third Ward was the center of an Irish neighborhood similar to the German Dutch Hill area and much of its architectural character remains intact.

Information on Altoona architects and builders was collected in each neighborhood survey. This material should be consolidated and expanded with a citywide perspective (Fig. 7.1). To counter the absence of remaining workers' housing along the tracks in the Fourth Ward survey area, a survey might be conducted of the area along 6th and 7th avenues north

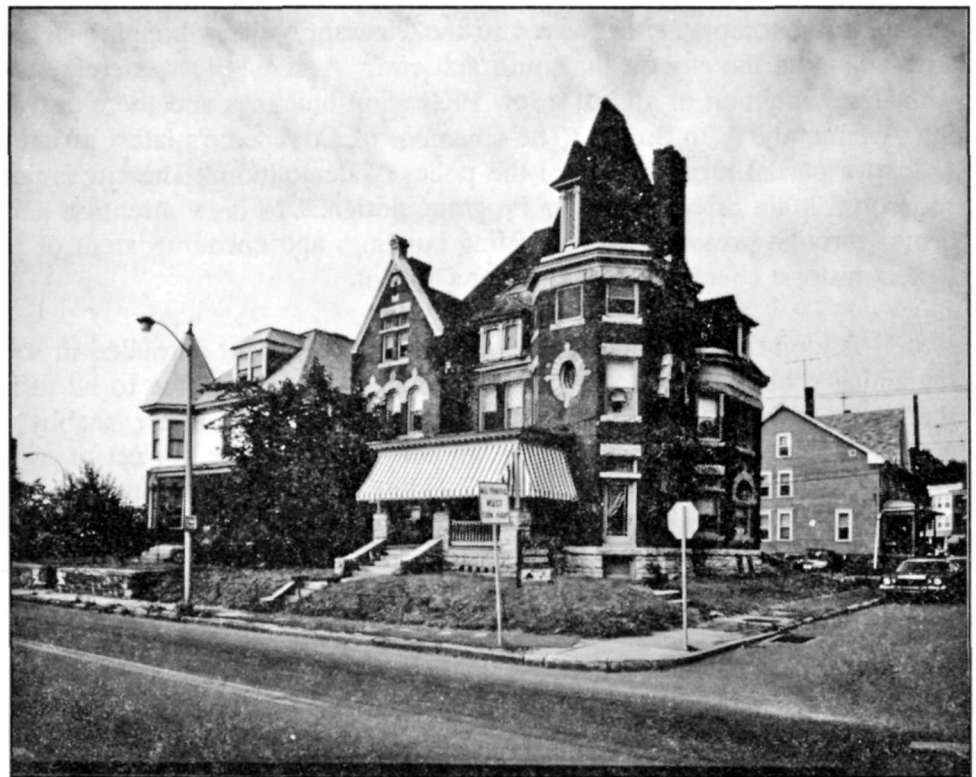


Fig. 7.1 D. F. O'Rourke House, 2000 Union Ave., a Beezer Bros. design (1893 catalog).



of 10th Street and south of 17th Street. It is in the blocks along these thoroughfares that one especially notices the rows of repeated or alternating house designs that are common throughout the city. Considering the "City of Homes" label, an overall survey should be undertaken to identify these types, attempt to locate their sources in nationally published plan books, and identify the local contractors, builders, and speculators who built them. A more systematic study of floor plans and use of interior space might be part of this inquiry. Interviews would be a crucial source of this and a host of other information, including the as yet still obscured history of women, blacks, and labor in Altoona.

As curator at Altoona's Railroaders' Memorial Museum, Ted Holland initiated some oral history interviewing. Such efforts should be continued and expanded and might be best if sponsored at least in part by local organizations in order to allow Altoonans a voice in the ongoing creation of their own "heritage"<sup>3</sup> and to look at Altoona history in ways that are not necessarily railroad-centered. The interest in Altoona's past and

in its "industrial heritage" has occurred because the western Pennsylvania region is now in a post-industrial era. Despite the tendency not to view recent developments as "history" or as worthy of study, some effort should be made to understand Altoona's post-railroad role in the mid-to-late twentieth century as a health care and retail center for south-central Pennsylvania, perhaps through the context of a study of a neighborhood established after the 1920s--the valley west of Fairview Cemetery or east of Prospect Hill, or on the south around Eldorado or Lakemont Terrace.



Fig. 7.2 View south across 8th and 9th avenues from 12th Street footbridge. Railroaders' Memorial Museum (foreground); (l-r) 2nd Presbyterian, St. James Lutheran, Roosevelt Junior High School.

<sup>3</sup>James Abrams, "Lost Frames of Reference: Cultural Recovery and the Crisis of Tradition in the Pennsylvania Coal Fields," paper presented for the conference "Cultural Conservation: Refiguring the Cultural Mission," Washington, D.C., May 1990.

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## HABS REPORTS

(in address order)

### CHARLES B. DUDLEY HOUSE

HABS No. PA-5502



**Fig. A.1** Charles B. Dudley House, 802 Lexington Ave.

Location: 802 Lexington Ave., Altoona, Blair County, Pa.

Present Owner: Carl B. Weimer, 510 Blair St., Hollidaysburg, Pa., 16648.

Present Use: The house has been vacant since 1970.

Significance: The two-and-a-half-story, side-passage house at 802 Lexington Ave. is representative of one type of housing stock found throughout Altoona, although most surviving examples are of brick veneer, rather than brick. Built as rental property in 1872, the house has a brief historical association with the chemist Charles B. Dudley (1842-1909), who purchased the property in 1896 and resided there from 1902 until his death in 1909. Dudley established the Pennsylvania Railroad Company's testing laboratory in Altoona, pioneering the use of applied science in industry. He was also a founding member of the American Society for Testing Materials and from 1902 until 1909 served as the organization's first president.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

## A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: 1871-72. A brick house valued at \$800 first appears in Altoona's 1872 tax assessments books. The lot was unimproved in 1871.
2. Architect: None.
3. Original and subsequent owners: The house was constructed for Andrew J. Sprankle, a partner in J. A. Sprankle and Bros., a dry goods and grocery business, soon after he acquired the lot from Robert H. McCormick. Sprankle, one of Altoona's larger landholders, rented out the house and lived elsewhere. Charles B. Dudley purchased the house and the double house next door from Sprankle's estate in 1896. After his death in 1909, Mary V. C. Dudley, his wife, sold the house to Manor Real Estate Co., a subsidiary of the Pennsylvania Railroad Company (PRR), which rented it to the families of railroad employees for many years. In 1949 the property was acquired by Orinoco Tribe No. 424, Improved Order of Red Men, a fraternal organization which met in the house until 1970. (City directories. Deed books: 40/438, 110/384, 196/688, 606/466)
4. Original plans and construction: The house, which was built as a single-family dwelling, evolved into its present form through three major phases of construction. Judging by the surviving physical evidence, the original two-and-one-half-story rectangular house measured 23'-3/4" x 32'-11"--one half of its present length. It was one room wide and two rooms deep, with a side passage extending the length of the house, a full, unfinished basement and a full attic finished with plaster and wallpapers. The original stairway, which has since been removed, appears to have risen along the southwest wall, beginning approximately 15 feet from the front door.
5. Alterations and additions: The house doubled in length and was substantially remodelled twice between 1872 and 1909. It seems that the side-passage plan remained functional to the families who lived there, but individual rooms changed shape and function several times.

Although the first major renovation cannot be documented precisely, it was definitely undertaken before 1894, when the changes were recorded on Altoona's Sanborn Fire Insurance maps. A two-story brick addition measuring approximately 13'-6" x 13' was built on the rear of the house, turning the rectangular plan into a T-shaped plan. The 1872 kitchen was shifted back to the new addition, where an exterior door on the northeast side provided access to the yard. The removal of the kitchen to the rear allowed the two rooms in the original block to take on the more formal functions of dining and sitting rooms. A new bedroom was added to the second floor, and the unfinished attic provided additional storage space. The northwest facade, now enclosed by a second rear addition, still retains the pair of narrow, round-arched windows that once supplied light to the attic. A full, single-story front porch, since removed, and a partial porch near the north corner of the house were also built at this time.

In ca. 1906 Charles and Mary Dudley renovated the house extensively. They extended the northeast and southwest sides of the pre-1894 addition until they were flush with the original block, and built a 19', two-and-one-half story brick addition to the rear of the house. Again, a kitchen and pantry area were installed in the new section, enabling the front three first-floor rooms to take on even more specialized functions. The

former kitchen was converted into a dining room with a three-part window and interior window seat. On the southwest side, a new stairway to service the rear of the house was built between the former exterior wall and the new one.

Although documentation is lacking, it seems reasonable to assume that the Dudleys were responsible for several other improvements, including the house's new slate roof (later replaced with composition roofing), and the ornamental, cast-iron fence which stood around three sides of the property until the 1960s. These substantial changes seem more likely to have been made by a new owner than by the aging Andrew Sprankle, who regarded the house as merely rental property. During the occupancy of the Melcher family, from 1932 to 1947, the house was painted light yellow with brown trim.

When Orinoco Tribe No. 424, Improved Order of Red Men acquired the house in 1949, its members removed most of the interior walls and the original front staircase to accommodate their club activities. The front porch was also dismantled, although evidence of its entablature and turned supports remain scarred on the brick. The original front door was replaced by a pair of institutional glass and aluminum doors, several of the windows were bricked up, and an exterior staircase of concrete block was added to the rear facade. The Melchers' lawn and gardens were turned into a gravel parking lot for the fraternal organization. (Sanborn maps: 1894, 1909, and 1932. Tax assessments. City directories. Interviews with Jean Melcher Hoopes)

#### B. Historical Context:

By the second decade of the twentieth century, "various places" along Lexington Avenue were counted among the finest residential neighborhoods in Altoona.<sup>1</sup> While architect-designed Italianate and Second Empire mansions were interspersed all along the avenue, most of the houses in the 800 block were more modest frame and brick-veneered dwellings, the homes of artisans, mechanics, and clerks. Some were constructed in the 1870s, like the Dudleys', while the few brick-veneered houses date from ca. 1890-1900. The house at No. 802 appears to be a rare, brick example.

This house was the home of Charles B. Dudley from about 1902 until his death in 1909. Dudley, who was born in 1842, received his doctorate in chemistry from Yale University's Sheffield Scientific School. In 1875 he moved to Altoona, becoming a research scientist for the PRR. Dudley went on to establish the railroad's widely acclaimed testing laboratory, pioneering the use of applied science in industry. He is perhaps best known for developing standard procedures for analyzing and testing materials, which in turn improved industrial quality and productivity. His research helped establish tighter controls on the transportation of explosives, and prompted Congress to enact legislation regarding the enforcement of safety standards in the railroad industry.<sup>2</sup> Dudley also took an active interest in the community: he was vice-president of the Second National Bank, president of the Juniata Club, chairman of the PRR's Library Committee, and a member of the city's board of health.

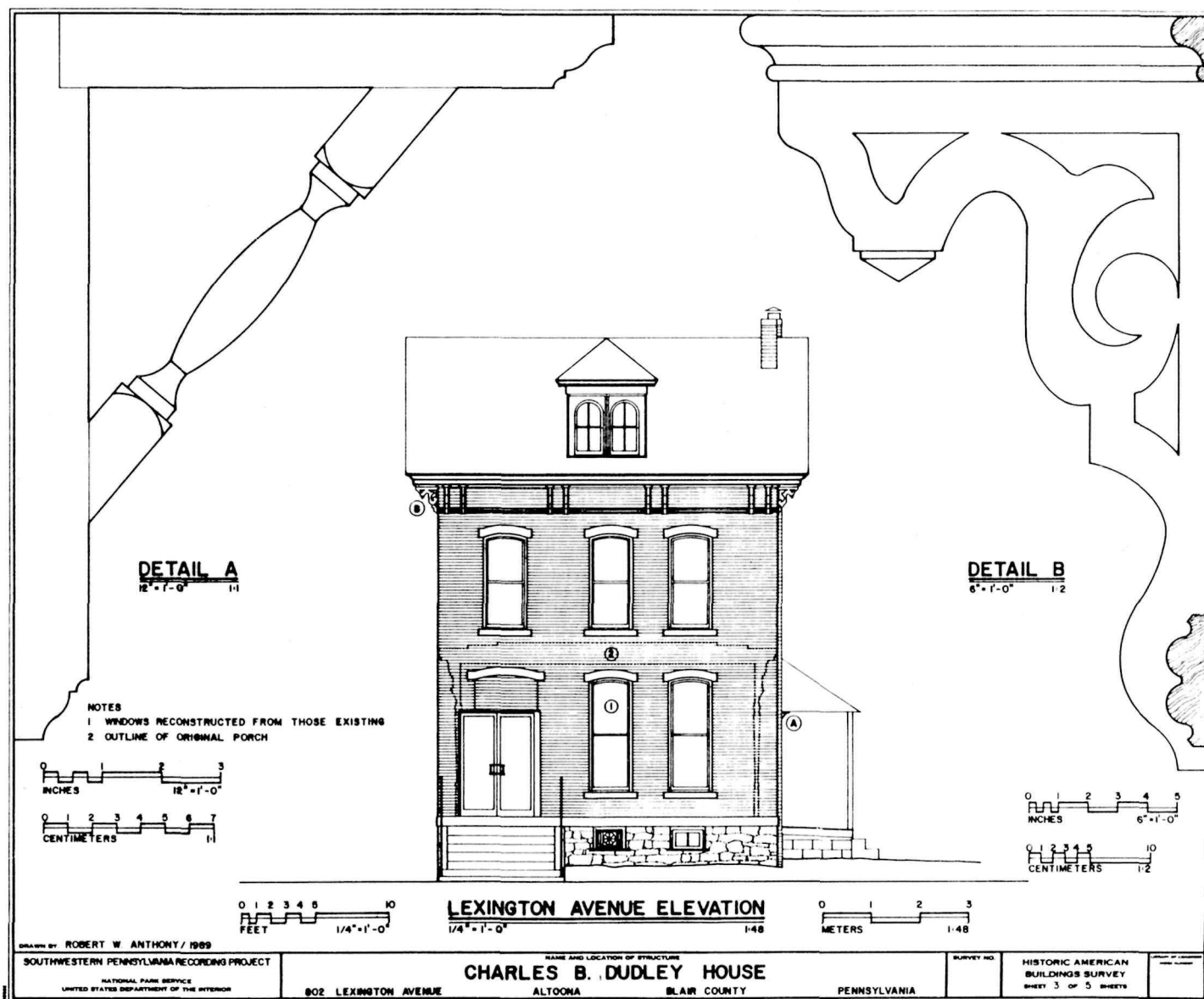
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<sup>1</sup>Jesse C. Sell, Twentieth Century History of Altoona and Blair County, Pennsylvania (Chicago: Richmond-Arnold Publishing Co., 1911), 285-6.

<sup>2</sup>For more detailed information on the life and achievements of Charles Dudley, see The Life and Life-Work of Charles Benjamin Dudley, Ph. D. (Philadelphia: American Society for Testing Materials, 1909), a memorial volume containing reflections, speeches, and excerpts from Dudley's work. See also, James Sheire, National Register Nomination for the Dudley House, 1976.



Fig. A2 Charles B. Dudley House, Lexington Avenue elevation. Drawn by Robert W. Anthony.



When Dudley purchased the house and the double house next door in 1896, he continued to rent them out while he resided downtown at the Logan House, the PRR's luxury hotel, or at the Juniata Club on Chestnut Street. At the turn of the century, Alexander J. Everhart, a machinist, rented the house with his wife, Emma. In 1900, Dudley boarded with the Everharts. Shortly thereafter, Dudley married Mary V. Crawford and took over the entire house. In 1909, Manor Real Estate and Trust Co., a subsidiary of the PRR, purchased the house from Dudley's widow for \$16,000. It was only valued at \$6,000. The additional \$10,000 was probably a widow's pension.<sup>3</sup> The real estate company continued to rent the property until 1949, when it was purchased by the Improved Order of Red Men, who occupied the house until 1970.

Due to the historical importance of Charles B. Dudley, the house received National Historic Landmark status in 1976.

## PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

### A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: The two-and-a-half-story, side-gable house has a plain brick facade ornamented with pairs of scrolled brackets under the eaves and returns on the gable ends. Such simple Italianate detailing is also typical of the later brick-veneered examples found on the East Side of Altoona.
2. Condition of fabric: Good-fair.

### B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: The rectangular red-brick house has a three-bay front and measures 23'- 3/4" x 62'-2".
2. Foundations: The rough-cut, semi-coursed stone foundations are approximately 1'-8" thick.
3. Walls: Rear and side walls are of brick laid in common bond. The Lexington Avenue facade is distinguished by the use of facing brick in running bond.
4. Structural systems, framing: The house was built with brick-bearing walls and wooden joists. The roof of the 1872 house appears to be framed with common rafters but lacks a ridge board. The first and second additions have typical common rafter systems.
5. Porches: There is a small service porch with a shed roof and two turned supports at the northern corner of the building. The porch has two stone approach steps, wood flooring, and wooden roof construction.
6. Chimneys: Two rectangular chimneys project through the northeastern part of the 1872 roof, on either side of the ridge. A third chimney, at the rear of the first addition, and a fourth chimney in the ca. 1906 addition originally served the kitchen stove on the first floor and metal heating stoves on the second.

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<sup>3</sup>City directories. PRR Board of Directors Meetings Minutes 21 (6/22/1910): 217.

## 7. Openings:

- a. Doorways and doors: The main entranceway, at the left of the facade, has been obscured by recent alterations. A pair of glass and aluminum doors have replaced the original front door. There are two secondary entrances on the northeast facade, each with five-panel exterior doors.
- b. Windows: The first- and second-floor windows are arranged in three bays in the front, six on the sides. At the first floor, the windows have two-over-two-light, segmentally arched sash with segmentally arched wood lintels above. At the second floor, all of the windows have been filled with brick. The wooden lintels on the second floor are also segmentally arched, except for those on the southwest facade, which are flat-arched. The attic windows are round-arched with two-over-one-light sash and round-arched brick lintels.

## 8. Roof:

- a. Shape: The 1872 house has a side-gabled roof. The rest of the house has a front-gabled roof with returns on the gable ends. The entire roof has been covered with green composition roofing.
- b. Cornice: The cornice has four pairs of scrolled brackets and returns on the gable ends.
- c. Dormers: The gabled dormer has paired, round-arched one-over-one-light windows, slate-shingle siding, and a composition roof.

## C. Description of Interior:

## 1. Floor plans:

- a. Basement: The basement, which runs the full length of the house, has a concrete floor, and unfinished walls and ceiling.
- b. First and second: Most of the interior walls and all of the fireplaces have been removed; the first and second floors consist of large, open rooms with service areas to the rear.

2. Stairways: The pre-1894 wood stairway rises against the southwest wall, accessible only from the back of the house.
3. Flooring: All floors now have diagonal pine flooring which appears to have been sub-flooring at one time; former occupant Jean Hoopes remembers hardwood floors.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: Originally plaster on lath. The earliest portion of the attic, finished with plaster on lath and wallpapers, was probably used as a bedroom. The remainder of the attic has exposed timber framing.
5. Openings: Typical interior doors have five rectangular panels. Simple, molded trim remains around the windows and doors at the rear of the first and second floors, and in the oldest portion of the attic.

Fig. A3 Charles B. Dudley House, 8th Street elevation. Drawn by Robert W. Anthony.



## D. Site:

1. General setting and orientation: The house stands on a double lot at the northwest corner Lexington Avenue and 8th Street, facing southeast.
2. Outbuildings: A brick-veneered garage from the 1920s was demolished when the fraternal organization took over the property.
3. Landscaping, enclosures: A ca. 1930s photograph shows a cast-iron fence along the street and alley sides. There were also foundation plantings, a variety of flower gardens near 8th Street, and a trellis with climbing vines on the service porch.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- A. Early views: Photograph of the back yard looking northeast, showing a portion of the rear porch, ca. 1930s. Collection of Jean Melcher Hoopes, Hollidaysburg, Pennsylvania.
- B. Interviews: Jean Melcher Hoopes, interviews by Nancy Spiegel, Altoona and Hollidaysburg, Pa., summer 1989. Hoopes's family rented the house from 1932 to 1947. Her father, William D. Melcher, was an engineer for the PRR, and a member of the railroad band.

## C. Bibliography:

## 1. Primary sources:

Deed Books and Tax Assessment Records. Blair County Courthouse, Hollidaysburg, Pennsylvania.

Improved Order of Red Men. Membership records, account books, and ceremonial materials belonging to Orinoco Tribe No. 424 can be found in the house.

Insurance Maps of Altoona, Pennsylvania. New York: Sanborn-Perris Co., 1894.

Insurance Maps of Altoona, Blair County, Pennsylvania. New York: Sanborn Map Co., 1909.

Insurance Maps of Altoona...Pennsylvania. New York: Sanborn Map Co., 1932.

PRR Board of Directors Meetings Minutes, State Archives, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.

## 2. Secondary sources:

Sell, Jesse C. Twentieth Century History of Altoona and Blair County, Pennsylvania. Chicago: Richmond-Arnold Publishing Co., 1911.

Sheire, James. National Register Nomination for the Charles B. Dudley House, 1976.



**PENNSYLVANIA RAILROAD COMPANY HOUSE**  
**(Klesius and Sheedy Heating and Roofing)**  
HABS No. PA-5503



**Fig. A.4** PRR Company House, 1121-23 8th Ave.

Location: 1121-23 8th Ave., Altoona, Blair County, Pa.

Present Owner: George and Margaret Sheedy.

Present Use: Sheet metal shop on the first floor; one apartment on the second. The remainder of the building is used for storage.

Significance: Unlike the Cambria Iron Works in Johnstown, which built hundreds of company houses, the Pennsylvania Railroad Company eschewed the construction of housing for its sub-managerial workers. The double house at 1121-23 8th Ave. was one of only eight identical frame houses built in 1853 by the PRR to house its skilled and semi-skilled workers. It is the only one still standing. Enlarged with a projecting brick storefront in 1907, the two-and-a-half-story house incorporates Gothic Revival vergeboards and a prominent finial on the gable end.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: Probably 1853. In 1852, eight contiguous lots on Eighth Avenue were conveyed from Archibald Wright to Herman Haupt, superintendent of transportation for the Pennsylvania Railroad. The houses were probably constructed immediately after Haupt deeded the unimproved lots to the railroad company in January 1853. An 1853 photo (Fig. 2.6) show them under construction.
2. Architect: None.
3. Original and subsequent owners: On March 7, 1865, the railroad company sold the eastern half of the double house (No. 1121) to its occupant, John McCormick, a trainmaster, and his wife Mary. Two years later, in January 1867, the western half of the house (No. 1123) was deeded to George Hawksworth, the foreman of a blacksmith shop. In 1906, his wife Susan sold this half to George Klesius, a tinsmith, in whose family the property remains.

In contrast, the eastern half of the house became rental property for a long succession of wealthy businessmen who resided elsewhere, including William Lloyd, David K. Ramey, a contractor and lumber merchant who lived in the prestigious 1200 block of 12th Street, and T. B. Patten, the postmaster of Altoona, who also resided on the west side of town. George Klesius purchased this western half in 1923, continuing to rent it to tenants until 1953, when his sheet metal business expanded into the entire first floor of the house. In 1972, the property was deeded it to the present owners for \$11,150. (Deed books: D/173; E/493. For the continuing chain of title for No. 1121, see 30/654; 28/408; 30/655; 50/243; 54/124 and 316/319. For No. 1123, see T/257; Will Books G/88 and 168/666. For the consolidated property, see 402/341 and 930/519.)

4. Builder, contractor, suppliers: Unknown.
5. Original plans and construction: Much of the original plan has been obscured by twentieth-century alterations. Judging solely by the physical evidence, however, each of the mirror-image halves had a side-passage plan, and was four rooms deep. The third-floor attic was finished and apparently used for additional bedroom space.
6. Alterations and additions: By the turn of the twentieth century, 8th Avenue was assuming an increasingly commercial character. In 1907, a two-story, 24'-11" x 16'-11" brick storefront was added to the facade of No. 1123. A third chimney was added at that time, providing heat for the upstairs apartment. More recent changes to the consolidated property include the removal of interior walls and some of the fireplaces on the first floor. The upper floors, however, remain virtually unaltered, except for the addition of bathrooms and a kitchen in three of the former bedrooms. Still more recently, the exterior walls of the east side of the house have been altered, extending the building's frontage by 7'-6".

B. Historical Context:

The problems of attracting and housing a new work force in the virtual wilderness were soon apparent to railroad officials. As early as 1852, Herman Haupt, local superintendent of transportation for the PRR, acknowledged the housing situation in Altoona and explained the railroad's policy. Haupt had stressed to PRR President William Patterson "the importance of providing in time suitable accommodations for our operatives at Altoona," but Patterson preferred that housing be funded by private capital. Haupt decided to provide the private

capital himself and formed a joint stock association ("to which I myself was a large contributor") to construct thirty-two houses. When he had to leave Altoona the following year, Haupt requested that the PRR take over the venture at least to complete the immediate commitment for eight double houses. He again urged that the buildings "are indispensable and no transfer of our operations to Altoona can be made until they are erected."<sup>4</sup>

All told, the PRR owned eleven double houses including eight on 8th Avenue, probably those Haupt had initiated. However, the company preferred to divest itself of such investments, and sold the houses to their employee-occupants in 1859 "on terms advantageous to both parties." The purchasers included Jacob Szink, a fireman, at 1205 8th Ave.; Ambrose Ward, a car inspector, at No. 1209; and John Glanding, a blacksmith, at No. 1227. Only the double house at 1121-23 8th Ave., originally purchased by John McCormick, trainmaster, and George W. Hawksworth, foreman of the blacksmith shop, remains.<sup>5</sup>

## PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

### A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: The front-gabled double house retains most of its original exterior fabric, including Gothic Revival cornice detailing. Large and deep (compared to other housing types from the period and region), with numerous fireplaces, the house would have accommodated two families in relative comfort and style.
2. Condition of fabric: Good-fair.

### B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: The two-and-one-half-story, rectangular frame house measures 32'-4" x 67'-5". The brick store added to the front of No. 1123 measures 24'-11" x 16'-11".
2. Foundations: Fieldstone.
3. Walls: The western half of the facade has been obscured by the addition of the projecting storefront. The eastern half, which has been covered with asphalt siding, has narrow cornerboards. The west and south facades of the house have narrow, lapped clapboarding. The storefront is in two parts, with the apartment entrance located in the left bay, and a single-story, store entrance and display window topped by novelty siding and a wood cornice in the second and third bays. Its facade is laid in running bond; the east and west walls, in common bond.
4. Structural systems, framing: Balloon-frame construction; attic framing is inaccessible.
5. Chimneys: Two rectangular brick chimneys project through the ridge of the roof. A third, smaller chimney is located on the downward slope of the west side of the roof.

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<sup>4</sup>Fifth Annual Report of the Directors of the Pennsylvania Railroad Company to the Stockholders, February 2, 1852 (Philadelphia: Crissy and Markley, 1852), 64.

<sup>5</sup>Thirteenth Annual Report of the Directors of the Pennsylvania Railroad Company to the Stockholders, February 6, 1860 (Philadelphia: Crissy and Markley, 1862), 45. Deed Books: V/585 (No. 1205), R/362 (No. 1209), R/24 (No. 1227), 30/654 (No. 1121), and T/257 (No. 1123). Blair County Courthouse, Hollidaysburg, Pa.

## 6. Openings:

- a. Doorways and doors: The original entrance to the eastern half of the double house remains intact; however, the door itself is new. On the storefront addition, the apartment entrance has a panelled door with one rectangular pane of glass set into the upper portion, and a rectangular transom above. The door is topped by a smaller wood cornice.
- b. Windows: The two-part, first-floor window on the eastern side of the facade is an early twentieth-century replacement; the original window opening probably lined up with the second-floor window, which now has one-over-one lights. The storefront has three large plate-glass windows with the words "KLESIUS AND SHEEDY" stencilled in gold. The three second-floor windows have segmental arches, projecting wood sills, and one-over-one lights. There is a paired, round-arched window beneath the eaves of the gable end. The windows of the west facade have drip molds and two-over-two lights.

## 7. Roof:

- a. Shape: Gable-front with a steep pitch. A corbelled parapet wall obscures the flat roof of the storefront.
- b. Cornice, eaves: The house has an open cornice with the rafters sheathed parallel to the overlying roof. There are decorative vergeboards and a prominent finial on the gable end.
- c. Dormers: The two pairs of gabled dormers each have one pointed-arch window with nine-over-six lights.

## C. Description of Interior:

## 1. Floor plans:

- a. First: Most of the first floor plan has been obscured by the post-1950s expansion of the sheet metal shop.
- b. Second and third: Each half of the double house has a linear plan; it is one room wide and four rooms deep.

## 2. Stairways: The enclosed wood stairways are original.

## 3. Flooring: Original narrow pine boards are used throughout the house; some second-floor rooms also have old linoleum carpets.

## 4. Wall and ceiling finish: Plaster on lath. In several of the second- and third-floor rooms, there are multiple layers of wallpaper, some with matching borders that date to the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

## 5. Openings:

- a. Doorways and doors: The original pine doors are typical of the Greek Revival

period. They have four narrow, rectangular molded panels.

- b. Windows: The windows have wide, flat surrounds with molded sills.
- c. Fireplaces: Some of the remaining fireplaces on the second floor have wide bolection moldings.

D. Site:

- 1. General setting and orientation: The house stands on 8th Avenue between 11th and 12th streets, facing northwest.
- 2. Outbuildings: A one-story frame garage is attached to the rear of the building and opens onto an alley.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- A. Early views: 1853 photograph showing eight double houses along 8th Avenue, reproduced in Robert L. Emerson Allegheny Passage: An Illustrated History of Blair County. Woodland Hills, Cal.: Windsor Publications, 1984, p. 34.
- B. Interview: George Sheedy, interview by Nancy Spiegel, Altoona, Pa., August 21, 1989.
- C. Bibliography:
  - 1. Primary sources:
    - Altoona, Pennsylvania. New York: Sanborn Map and Publishing Co., Ltd., 1888.
    - City Directories, 1870-1985, passim. Altoona Area Public Library and Baker Mansion Historical Library.
    - Insurance Maps of Altoona, Pennsylvania. New York: Sanborn-Perris Co., 1894.
    - Insurance Maps of Altoona, Blair County, Pennsylvania. New York: Sanborn Map Co., 1909.
    - Insurance Maps of Altoona...Pennsylvania. New York: Sanborn Map Co., 1932.
    - Deed Books and Tax Assessments for Altoona's Eighth Ward. Blair County Courthouse, Hollidaysburg, Pa.



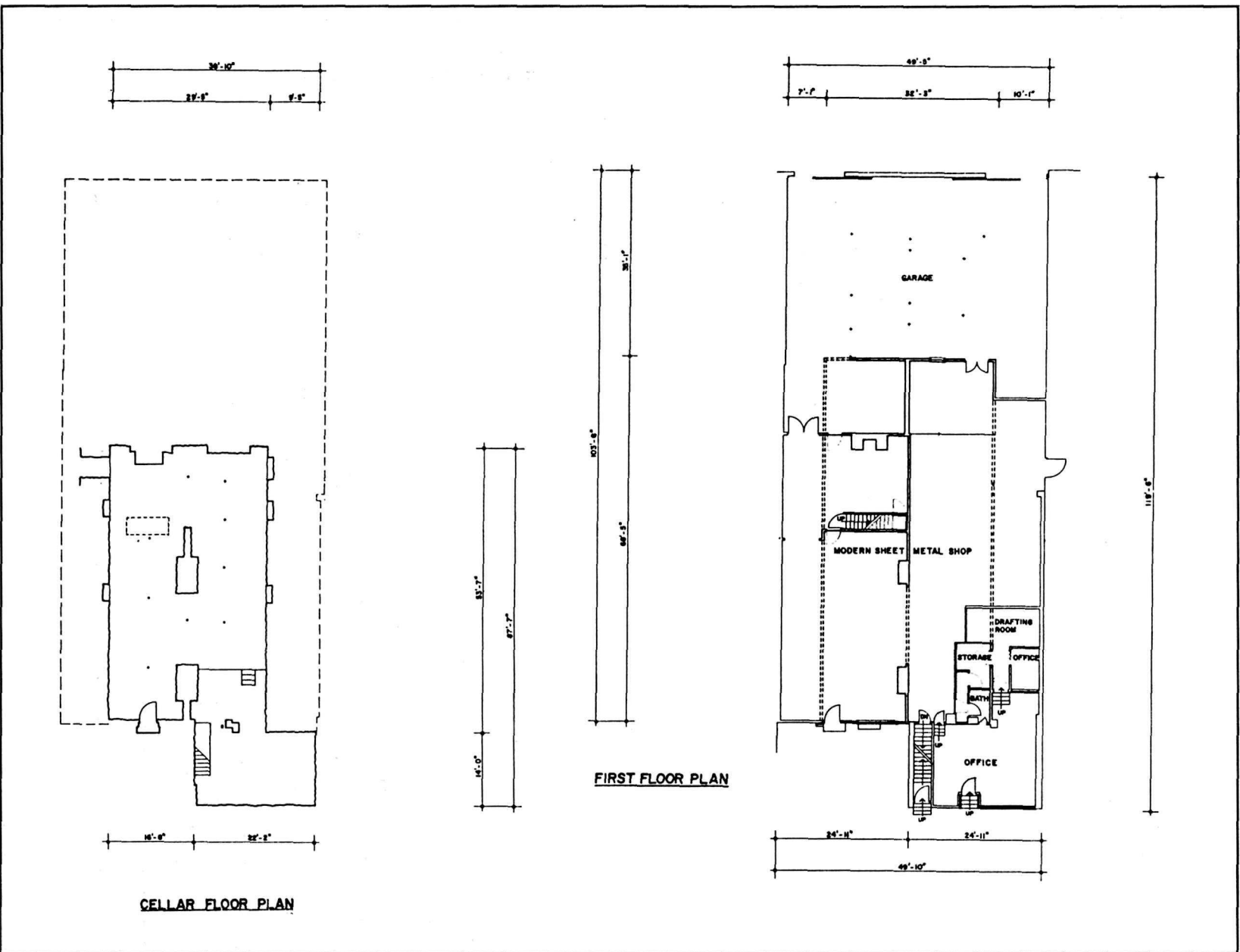


Fig. A5 PRR Company House, 1121-23 8th Ave., cellar- and first-floor plans. Drawn by Richard Kooschagian.

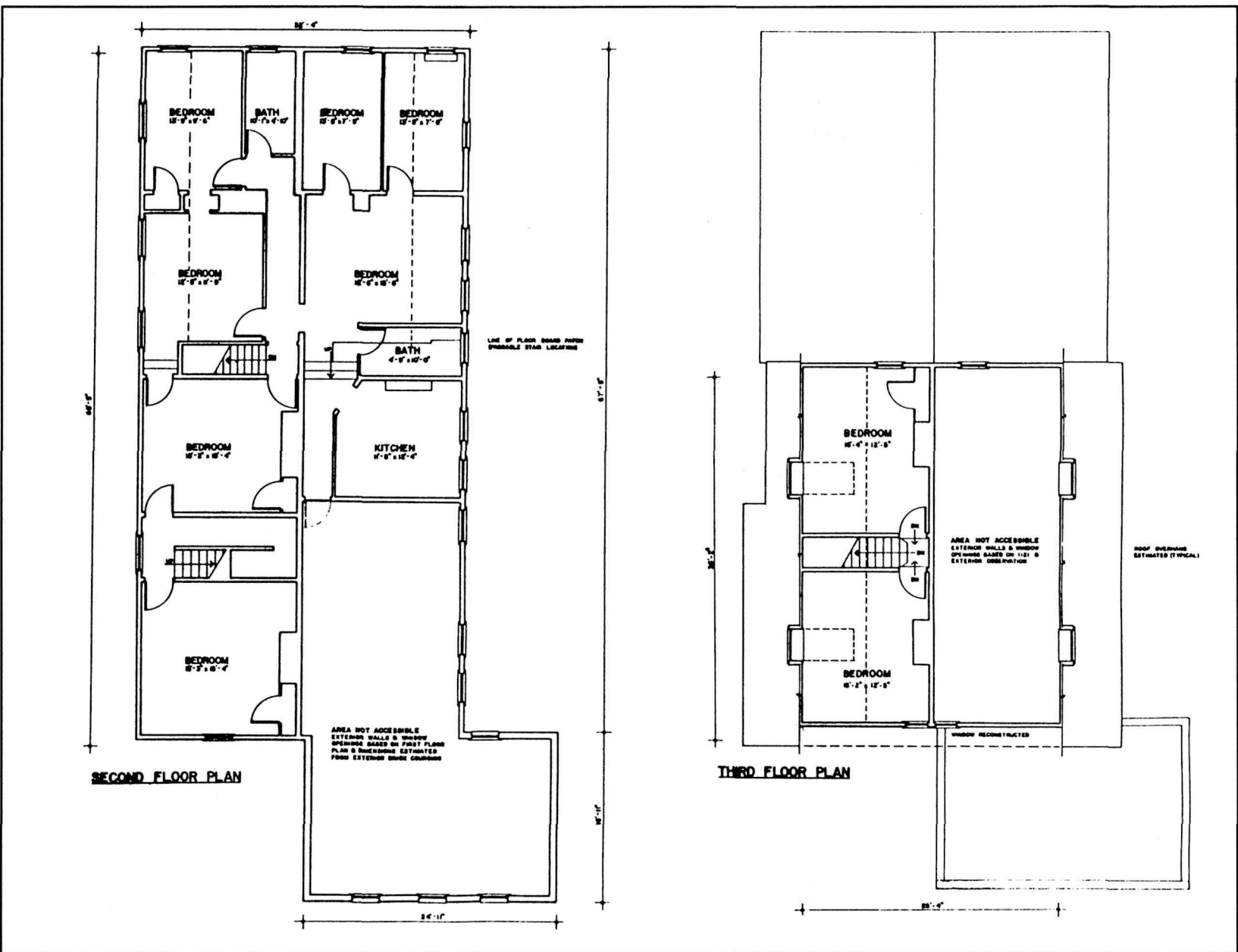


Fig. A6 PRR Company House, 1121-23 8th Ave., second- and third-floor plans. Drawn by Richard Kooschagian.

**SILVERMAN BUILDING**  
(Penn Central Building, Black and Yon Building)  
HABS No. PA-5504



**Fig. A.7** Silverman Building, corner 11th Avenue and 12th Street, looking west.

Location: 1200-04 11th Ave. (northwest corner of 11th Avenue and 12th Street), Altoona, Blair County, Pa.

Present Owner: Andrew G. Shank, c/o Miles and Stockbridge, Attorneys-at-Law, 10 Light St., 8th floor, Baltimore, Md., 21202.

Present Use: Suites of business and professional offices occupy all six floors.

Significance: The Silverman Building is the most elaborate office building on 11th Avenue. Dating to 1924-25, the steel-framed structure is faced with white glazed terra cotta in a Neoclassical design. The building, constructed for local real estate entrepreneurs Jacob and Isaac Silverman, was erected on a site that had been owned and occupied by the Pennsylvania Railroad Company since 1851. Now known as the Black and Yon Building, this is still Altoona's most prestigious business address.

## PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

### A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: 1924-25. A steam shovel broke ground for the new building June 1,

1924. By the summer of 1925, the building was ready for tenants.

2. Architect: Unknown.
3. Original and subsequent owners: In 1924, Jacob and Isaac Silverman acquired the site for their new business block from the Pennsylvania Railroad Company for \$240,000. They sold the building to Penn Central Light and Power Company on July 2, 1926, just one year after its completion. (Deed books C/371; 319/386; 349/251,261) The electric company occupied the building until 1965, when it was sold to the firm of Lindfelter-Scott. In 1969, the building was purchased by a real estate and insurance firm and renamed the Black and Yon Building. It was sold to the current owner in 1989.
4. Contractor, suppliers: C. M. Singiser (1878-1940) supervised the construction of the Silverman building. A native of Mechanicsburg, Pa., Singiser came to Altoona in 1915 to erect the Silverman's Strand Theatre at 1504 11th Ave. He went on to supervise the construction of several large public buildings in and near the downtown area, including the Aaron building in 1922 and the Jaffa Mosque on Broad Avenue, which was designed by the local architectural firm of Shollar and Hersh. (Singiser obituary, Altoona Mirror [March 18, 1940])

A local newspaper noted that the Silvermans awarded no building contract, but "local materials and local labor, as far as practicable, entered into [the building's] construction." ("Silverman Block Almost Finished." Altoona Mirror [June 8, 1925])



Fig. A.8 Silverman Building, 12th Street facade.

5. Original plans and construction: The building was designed to house a department store on the first and mezzanine floors, but was never occupied as such. There were entrances on both the 12th Street and 11th Avenue sides; the 11th Avenue entrance was originally in the third bay. The third-to-fifth floors had suites of offices. An elaborate terra cotta beltcourse between the mezzanine and second floors marks the division between commercial shops and offices. The first-floor storefronts have undergone many changes, as have most aspects of the interior.
6. Alterations and additions: When Penn Central took over the building in 1926, the electric company installed a three-tiered, illuminated sign on the roof, facing 11th Avenue. A 1931 photograph of the building also shows an awning on the 11th Avenue side.

In 1966, First National Bank expanded into a portion of the first and mezzanine floors of the Silverman Building. An opening was cut in the party wall to connect the addition to the remainder of the bank. First National hired Altoona architect N. Grant Nicklas to design a new facade of marble aggregate and glass panels in bronze settings. The 11th Avenue entrance was moved to the second bay, where it remains. More recent changes include the closing off of the mezzanine level and the installation of drop ceilings throughout the building.



Fig. A.9 Silverman Building, detail of 12th Street facade.

B. Historical Context:

Built on the site of the landmark Pennsylvania Railroad Company office building, the six-story structure was erected for real estate entrepreneurs Jacob and Isaac Silverman in 1924-25. The Silvermans literally made headlines when they spent the previously unheard of sum of \$240,000 for the site of their new business block. At the time, this undertaking was the most expensive real estate transaction ever recorded in the Blair County Registry of Deeds. The Silverman's real estate activities also represented a takeover by local interests of a prime commercial



property that had been controlled by the PRR since 1851.<sup>6</sup>

The Silverman's terra cotta-faced building was a wildly speculative venture, an indication of the risks that businessmen were willing to take in a decade characterized by tremendous prosperity and optimism. The building stood vacant for a year; it was never occupied by the intended department store. The Silvermans sold the structure to the Penn Central Light and Power Company in 1926. In exchange for the building and \$204,000, Penn Central conveyed to Jacob and Isaac Silverman their old corporate headquarters on Union Avenue and \$295,000.<sup>7</sup>

Penn Central was formed in 1910 from the merger of two pre-existing power companies: the Edison Electric Illuminating Company, founded in 1887, and the Citizens Electric Light, Heat, and Power Company, founded in 1902. In 1937, the company changed its name to the Pennsylvania Edison Company, and in 1946 it merged with the Pennsylvania Electric Company, eventually forming Penelec. The electric company originally occupied the first and mezzanine floors of the building. The office entrance was on 11th Avenue; retail electric supplies were sold on the 12th Avenue side.

The company left in 1965, and the building is now known as the Black and Yon Building after the real estate firm that purchased it in 1969.

## PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

### A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: The building is divided into three vertical zones, with the intermediate stories separated into vertical bands. The Neoclassical design on both the street and avenue facades is executed in white glazed terra cotta.
2. Condition of fabric: Good.

### B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: The six-story, rectangular building measures 120' x 60' with six bays on 12th Street and three bays on 11th Avenue.
2. Foundations: Granite.
3. Walls: White glazed terra cotta walls on the street facades. The window bulkheads and pilaster bases are of verd antique marble. Fluted Corinthian pilasters rise between the bays, from the third story to the fifth. Cornices crown the first two stories and the middle three stories; the whole is topped by an additional story. The spandrels are elaborately decorated with Neoclassical motifs. The alley facade is red brick.

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<sup>6</sup>For more information on the Silverman Brothers' extensive real estate and construction activities, see the pages of land transactions recorded in Blair County's grantee-grantor index, 1900-1940. See also, Altoona Mirror: "Business Block on Church Site," (March 17, 1923), which describes their new building on the corner of 16th Street and Union Avenue, and "New Building to be Erected Here," (April 9, 1937), which discusses the Strand Block Inc., Building, a three-story glass and terra cotta building designed by Frederic Shollar. In addition to business blocks, the Silvermans built the Nickelodeon Theatre in 1905, Pastime in 1906, and Strand in 1915. They also constructed and operated the Logan Theatre in Altoona and the Blair in Hollidaysburg. At one time, they owned a chain of thirteen theaters in four states.

<sup>7</sup>For the provisions of their agreement, see Deed Books 349/251 and 349/261.

4. Structural systems, framing: Steel frame with 12" and 16" brick curtain walls.
  5. Openings:
    - a. Doorways and doors: There are four entrances. On 11th Avenue, the entrance is located in the second bay. On 12th Street, there are two stores, flanked by the entrance to the elevator lobby. Originally, the exterior entrances were embellished with "imported travertine marble"; they now have modern glass fronts and glass and aluminum doors.
    - b. Windows: The first-floor display windows were originally constructed with 240 feet of plate glass. There were also three "island windows" on 12th Street. On the upper stories, the openings are rectangular, with a three-part window in each structural bay.
  6. Roof: A parapet wall obscures the flat roof.
- C. Description of Interior:
1. Floor plans:
    - a. First: Modern stores. The elevator lobby is located at the end of a transverse corridor in the fourth bay of the 12th Street side. The floor-to-ceiling height is 14'.
    - b. Mezzanine-Fifth: Typically, these floors have a single-loaded, irregularly shaped corridor that runs longitudinally, lit on the 12th Street end by one window. The floor-to-ceiling height of the mezzanine is 10'; it is now blocked up. The second floor has a floor-to-ceiling height of 15'; and each of the upper floors have a floor-to-ceiling height of 12'.
  2. Stairways: The main stairway is of steel construction with marble treads. It is located in the longitudinal corridor on each floor, and rises to the roof against the rear wall. Fire doors have recently been installed at every level.
  3. Flooring: Most of the original hardwood floors have been covered with wall-to-wall carpet or new floor tile.
  4. Wall and ceiling finish: Most of the walls have been covered with new materials. There are dropped ceilings in several offices and corridors.
  5. Openings:
    - a. Doorways and doors: Most of the doors are modern glass or wood. Few of the office doors retain their original rectangular transoms and molded surrounds.
    - b. Windows: The first-floor display windows on the 12th Avenue side retain remnants of their original veneered Corinthian columns and wood-paneled display cases.
  6. Original mechanical systems:

- a. Heating: Steam heat was generated by twin smokeless boilers in the basement.
  - b. Lighting: The building was equipped with electric lighting provided by transformers in a specially constructed basement compartment.
- D. Site: At the time of its construction, the Silverman Building stood in the geographical center of the business district. It was described by contemporary observers as the "100 per cent business building and the 100 per cent location . . . combined." (Altoona Mirror, [June 8, 1925]) Today, the six-story office building is so placed at the intersection of 11th Avenue and 12th Street that it has become a historic landmark in its own right.

### PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Original architectural drawings: None.

B. Early views:

- 1. An early photograph of the Penn Central Building, showing an awning on the 11th Avenue facade and a three-tiered illuminated sign on the roof, appears in the Report of the Penn Central Light and Power Co. for the Year Ending Dec. 31, 1930. (Altoona: Penn Central Co. 1931), 22. Altoona Mirror library collection.

C. Interviews:

Clyde Yon, former owner and longtime occupant of the Silverman building, interview by Nancy Spiegel, Altoona, Pa., July 21, 1989.

Joseph S. and Louis P. Silverman, sons of Isaac Silverman, telephone interviews by Nancy Spiegel, August 17-18, 1989.

D. Bibliography:

1. Primary sources:

a. Altoona Mirror:

"Business Block on Church Site," (March 17, 1923).

"Deal Closed on Silverman Block," (July 1, 1926).

"New Building to be Erected Here," (April 9, 1937).

"Penn Central to Get New Building," (June 1, 1926).

"Silverman Block Almost Finished," (June 8, 1925).

Silverman, Isaac. Obituary. (March 29, 1972).

Silverman, Jacob. Obituaries. (December 3 and 5, 1962).

Singiser, Charles M. Obituary. (March 18, 1940).

"Strand Theatre Seven Years Old," (May 26, 1923), includes biographical information on the Silverman Brothers.

- b. The Altoona Mirror library also has nine large envelopes of material relating to the Penn Central and Penelec Companies, including brochures, press releases, clippings, and several illustrated annual reports from the 1920s and 1930s. Among the most useful clippings is "Penn Central is Giant Utility," 28 April 1925, which provides a detailed history of the company.

Building Record. Tax Assessment Office, Blair County Courthouse, Hollidaysburg, Pa.

Deed books. Blair County Courthouse, Hollidaysburg, Pa.

2. Secondary sources:

Wolf, George A, ed. Blair County's First Hundred Years: 1846-1946. Altoona: The Mirror Press, 1945.

## UNITED STATES POST OFFICE

HABS No. PA-5505

Location: 1201 11th Ave. (southwest side of 11th Avenue between 12th and 13th streets), Altoona, Blair County, Pa.

Present Owner: Federal government.

Present Use: U.S. post office and offices of several government agencies.

Significance: The U.S. post office, designed by the local architectural firm of Royer and Anglemyer in 1931, is the city's outstanding example of the Art Deco style. The monumental Neoclassical building, of Indiana limestone with a granite foundation, is richly embellished with linear, low-relief, ornamentation. The interior of the post office, which displays multi-colored marble wainscoting and two murals by W.P.A. artist Lorin Thompson, is in virtually unaltered condition. The building was the second federal post office to be erected in Altoona in the twentieth century, and its construction symbolizes the city's unprecedented growth during the 1910s and 1920s.

### PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

#### A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: 1931-33. Excavation began in November 1931. The limestone cornerstone was laid May 4, 1932, without ceremony, in keeping with federal policy; the building opened to the public March 1, 1933.
2. Architect: Royer and Anglemyer of Altoona were the project's architects, receiving \$19,256 for their work. Associated with them in the planning and design of the post office were the firm of Hornbostel and Wood of Pittsburgh; Frederic J. Shollar of Altoona; and F. G. Rutan, also of Altoona, who had been the Chicago-based construction engineer for Penn Alto Hotel. James A. Wetmore of Washington, D.C., served as acting supervisory architect. Wetmore, a lawyer by training, was Supervising Architect of the U.S. Treasury Department from 1915 to 1933. ("Local Firm Will Plan Postoffice." Altoona Mirror [February 5, 1931])

The architectural firm of Royer and Anglemyer was formed in 1928, with offices in the Commerce Building. Born in York, Pa., in 1895, David A. Royer got his start in Altoona in 1921, working for Julian Millard. He established his own practice in 1924, when Millard left for Harrisburg to assume the post of State Supervising Architect. Ronald C. Anglemyer was born in Leetonia, Ohio, in 1896. Like Royer, he earned his B.S. in architecture from the University of Pennsylvania in 1921. After associating with the architectural firms of Wittman and Royer of York, and Lawry and Green of Harrisburg, Anglemyer moved to Altoona in 1928, establishing a partnership with Royer. Their firm was listed in city directories until the mid 1930s, when both men left Altoona for opportunities elsewhere. Royer apparently took a position as a state engineer in Harrisburg in 1935. (Davis, II:70-72; "Tendered Farewell," Altoona Mirror, [July 6, 1935])



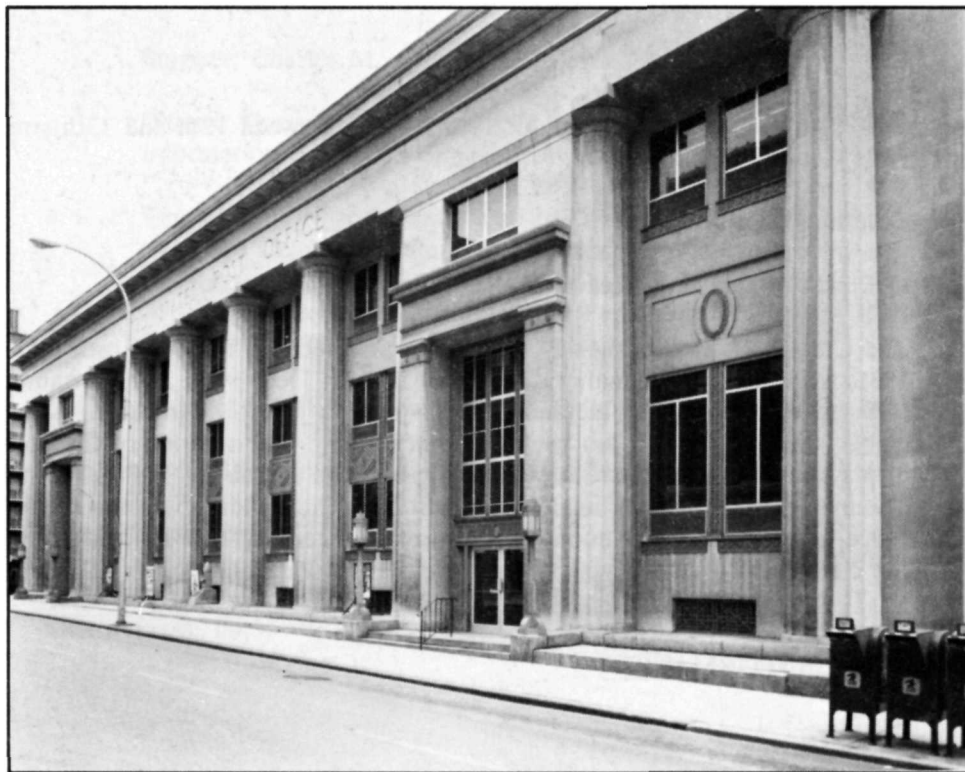
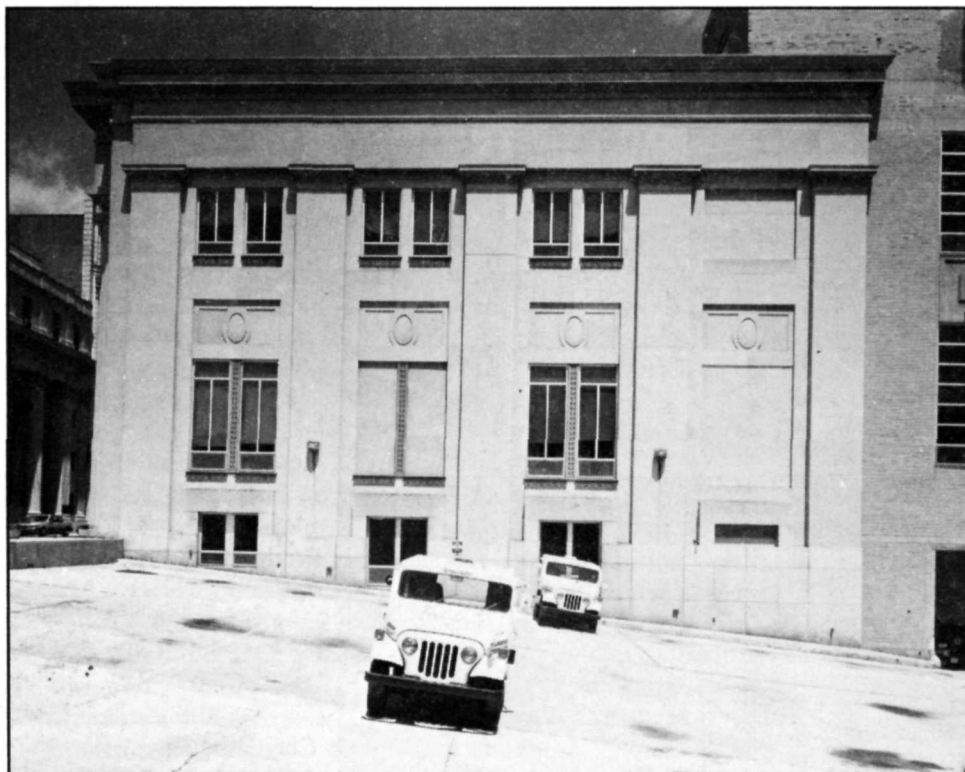


Fig. A.10 U.S. Post Office, 1201 11th Ave., perspective of 12th Avenue facade.



Fig. A.11 U.S. Post Office, perspective detail of 11th Avenue facade.



**Fig. A.12** U.S. Post Office, southwest facade.



**Fig. A.13** U.S. Post Office, northeast facade.

3. Original and subsequent owners: In 1930, the Pennsylvania Railroad Company sold the site to the federal government for \$350,000. The property included the Logan House hotel, erected in 1855, and the PRR's passenger station and ticket office. All of these buildings were razed to make way for the new post office.
  4. Builders, contractors, and suppliers:
    - a. Contractor: R. B. McDaniel of New Brighton, Pennsylvania, won the building contract. William A. Miller, a construction engineer, supervised the construction. Two additional firms won bids to demolish portions of the Logan House complex; on June 23, 1931, G. H. Shartzler received a contract to raze the hotel itself, and A. J. Kerns got a contract to clear the rest of the site.
    - b. Sub-contractors:

Structural steel: McClintock-Marshall Co., Pittsburgh, Pa.  
Reinforced steel: Kalman Co.  
Steel and aluminum sash: Detroit Steel Products.  
Ornamental metal and bronze work, interior and exterior: Art Metal Construction Co., Jamestown, N.Y.  
Elevators: American Elevator and Machine Co., Louisville, Ky., received a contract for \$23,489.  
Stone work: N.V. Frasca.  
Indiana limestone: Supplied by Altoona Clay Products.  
Electrical equipment: Installed by Bottorf Electric.  
Limestone for concrete work: Supplied by Eldorado Stone Co.  
Plumbing and heating: Trout and Taughenbaugh, Altoona.  
Interior painting: Adams Paint Co., Chicago, was awarded a contract for \$2,300.  
(Compiled from numerous articles in the U.S. Post Office clippings files, Altoona Mirror library)
  5. Original plans and construction: The three-story building was designed to house post office operations in the basement and on the first floor. The mezzanine and second floors were originally occupied by U.S. Army and Navy recruiting stations, the offices of the post office inspector, Internal Revenue Service, and Blair County reserves. The parcel post department also had its work space on the second floor. The total cost of construction was \$672,600, including the \$350,000 for the site.
  6. Alterations and additions: In 1937, two murals depicting scenes from Altoona's history were added to the interior, on either end of the central lobby. Financed by the Works Project Administration, the murals were executed by Lorin Thompson of Wilkinson, Pa.

In 1956, the giant, cast-aluminum eagles mounted over both of the 11th Avenue entrances were removed after their fastenings became loose. In 1959, the cast-aluminum cresting which ran around the entire roof was removed after a 15' section blew to the ground near the loading platform in the rear of the building.
- B. Historical Context:
- The first post office in the Altoona area was established in Collinsville, in 1817. A branch post office was set up in Altoona in 1850, just one year after the town was laid out; it was housed in either a private residence or business, depending upon the whim

of each new postmaster. In 1852, the post office was located in Thomas Elway's residence, at the corner of 12th Avenue and 14th Street; in 1853, it moved to Jerry Davis's butcher shop on 11th Avenue; and in 1856, it moved again to offices in the old Masonic Temple Building. From about 1875 until 1902, the post office occupied the first floor of the Odd Fellows Building on 12th Street between 10th and 11th avenues, a site convenient to both the business district and rail transportation.<sup>8</sup>

The first U.S. post office, a two-story limestone and terra cotta structure, was erected in 1901-02.

The building stood on the corner of 11th Street and Chestnut Avenue, opposite the Casanave Building. By the 1920s, however, the facility was too small to handle both the increased demands of parcel post, which was established in 1913, and the needs of the rapidly expanding city. The statistics are astonishing: Altoona's postal delivery area increased from three square miles in 1910 to almost nine square miles in 1932. By the late 1920s, moreover, gross postal receipts were up 609 percent from 1902 levels. An annex was constructed in 1925 to help with the increased volume of mail.<sup>9</sup>

The first U.S. post office remained in use until March 1, 1933, when the new building on 11th Avenue opened. It was demolished in 1946 to make way for a gasoline station, despite the best efforts of preservationists to convert the building into a public library.<sup>10</sup>



Fig. A.14 U.S. Post Office, detail of southwest entrance, 11th Avenue facade.

<sup>8</sup>"Early History of Post Office Given." *Altoona Mirror* (February 24, 1923).

<sup>9</sup>The statistics are cited in "New Post Office Building," typescript, n.d., *Altoona Mirror* library clippings file.

<sup>10</sup>For more information on the history of the first U.S. post office, see *Altoona Mirror*: "Early History of Post Office Given," (February 24, 1923); "Plan to Sell Old Federal Building," (March 16, 1937); and "Dynamite Has Little Effect on Postoffice," (August 14, 1946).

## PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

### A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: Three-story columns and pilasters add verticality to the post office's low, rectangular massing. Low-relief, stylized floral and geometric ornamentation embellishes the entire building.
2. Condition of fabric: Excellent.

### B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: The building measures 170' on 11th Avenue (nine bays) x 100' on 12th Street (five bays) x 52' high.
2. Foundations: Granite.
3. Walls: Smooth limestone on the street facades. The northeast (rear) and southeast (parking lot) facades have yellow brick walls laid in Flemish bond. There are eight engaged, fluted Doric columns, each three stories tall, on the 11th Avenue facade. The five bays on the 12th Street facade are separated by six three-story pilasters.
4. Structural systems, framing: The building has a steel and reinforced-concrete frame. Additional reinforcements were provided by two steel girders, one 74' long and 8' high, weighing 25 tons, and a second weighing 14 tons, which were placed at the rear base of the building to support the loading platform.
5. Openings:
  - a. Doorways and doors: The two main entrances are located in the second and eighth bays of the 11th Avenue facade. They each have two-story, Neoclassical surrounds; large, rectangular transoms; and new glass and aluminum double doors.
  - b. Windows: There are paired, two-part windows within each structural bay. The spandrels between the second- and third-floor windows have rectangular panels decorated with low-relief, geometric designs. The second and fourth windows on the southeast facade are bricked in.
6. Roof:
  - a. Shape: Flat roof.
  - b. Cornice: The frieze below the modillioned cornice reads, "UNITED STATES POST OFFICE."

### C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans:
  - a. First: The public space consists of a longitudinal lobby, giving access to the



counters and mailboxes on the left. The offices of the postmaster are located off the lobby on the 12th Street side.

- b. Mezzanine: Several offices open off of short, transverse corridors.
  - c. Second: Not accessible.
2. Stairways: Two stairways, both adjacent to the main entrances, rise to the mezzanine level. The handrails are brass; the treads, marble. A public elevator is located to the left of the stairway closest to the 12th Street.
  3. Flooring: Various floor coverings are used throughout the building. The inner vestibule has multi-colored terrazzo. The main lobby has multi-colored terrazzo, with a black marble border. The work rooms have asphalt floors; the first-floor offices, hardwood.
  4. Wall and ceiling finish: Plaster on lath. The inner vestibules have low-relief, stylized decoration around the door openings and on the ceiling. The central lobby has marble baseboards and marble and travertine walls; its vaulted ceiling is coffered. A floral medallion is centered in each of the hexagonal coffers. A denticulated plaster cornice and a band of trim in a Greek key motif run around the perimeter of the central lobby.
  5. Doorways and doors: The doorways have gray marble bolection moldings. Typical interior doors in the public lobby have two rectangular panels.
  6. Murals: The two rectangular murals, installed in 1937, depict scenes of national building efforts from the early days of Altoona. Their palette is subdued; blues, greens, browns, and black predominate. In 1939, the Altoona Mirror published some of Lorin Thompson's thoughts on his work:



Fig. A.15 U.S. Post Office, detail of lamp, 11th Avenue facade.

The smaller mural [the one closest to 12th Street] depicts the coming of railroad transportation and the displacement of the older modes of travel which are retreating from the scene. Stage coaches, Conestoga wagons, and canal boats are some of the earlier means of travel that are shown in the mural. The larger mural [closest to the post office parking lot] depicts the factors contributing to the growth of Altoona, the home, the church, the school, the industry . . . In the background are simplified representations of some of the more imposing and characteristic present-day Altoona buildings. (Peggy Gonter and Jeanne Stoke, "Senior High Art Students Enjoy Local Paintings," Altoona Mirror, [December 12, 1939])

7. Original furnishings: Three original, cast-metal writing tables with glass tops are still in use in the central lobby.
- D. Site: The U.S. post office stands on 11th Avenue between 11th and 13th streets, facing northwest.

### PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- A. Original architectural drawings: None located.
- B. Early view: Photograph by McDowell Photo Studio, 1934, looking southwest from 12th Street. Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
- C. Bibliography:

1. Primary sources:

#### Altoona Mirror:

"Dynamite Has Little Effect on Postoffice," (August 14, 1946), described the demolition of the first federal post office. The caption accompanying a photograph of the building likened the partially demolished structure to the bombed-out remains of buildings in northern European cities.

"Early History of Post Office Given," (February 24, 1923).

"Local Firm Will Plan New Post Office," (February 5, 1931).

"Major Repair Program Set at Post Office," (September 1, 1956).

"Old Fence Removed from Postoffice Roof," (December 12, 1956).

"Plan to Sell Old Federal Building," (March 16, 1937).

"Postoffice 'Grounds' Cast-Aluminum Eagles," (January 18, 1956).

"Proposed New Altoona Postoffice," (August 22, 1931), includes an architects' rendering of the front facade.

"Tendered Farewell," (July 6, 1935).

"New Post Office Building," typescript, n.d., contains a physical description of

the completed building. Altoona Mirror library clippings file.

2. Secondary sources:

Blair County's Postal History. Altoona: Blair County Historical Society, 1947. Provides a useful overview of the post office in Altoona.

Davis, Tarring S., ed. A History of Blair County. Volume II. Harrisburg: National Historical Association, 1931. Contains biographical sketches of David A. Royer and Ronald C. Anglemeyer.

Harris Emily. "Local Post Office Has Long History," Altoona Mirror (June 12, 1934).

U.S. Postal Service. "Historic, Architectural, and Archeological Significance Survey," 1983, makes the astonishing statement that "the building has no architectural or historical significance and is not located in an historically significant environment." The survey goes on to recommend that the post office not be nominated to the National Register.

Wolf, George A, ed. Blair County's First Hundred Years: 1846-1946. Altoona: The Mirror Press, 1945.

**FIRST NATIONAL BANK**  
**(Mellon Bank Central)**  
HABS No. PA-5506

Location: 1206 11th Ave.,  
Altoona, Blair  
County, Pa.

Present Owner: Mellon Bank Central,  
a subsidiary of the  
Mellon National  
Corporation.

Present Use: Mellon's banking  
floor and  
administrative offices  
occupy the first four  
levels of the building.  
There is a suite of  
attorneys' offices on  
the fifth floor.

Significance: The second ,  
headquarters of a  
bank established in  
1863, the First  
National Bank of  
Altoona was  
described as a  
"magnificent temple  
of finance" when it  
opened in 1926.  
Architect John A.  
Dempwolf's  
monumental, temple-  
front design well  
suited Altoona's

prosperous commercial streetscape of the 1920s, and was frankly intended to evoke the wealth and stability of the Roman imperial era that inspired its form. The bank's Neoclassical exterior is complemented by a virtually unaltered interior featuring two murals depicting a century of progress in the transportation industry.

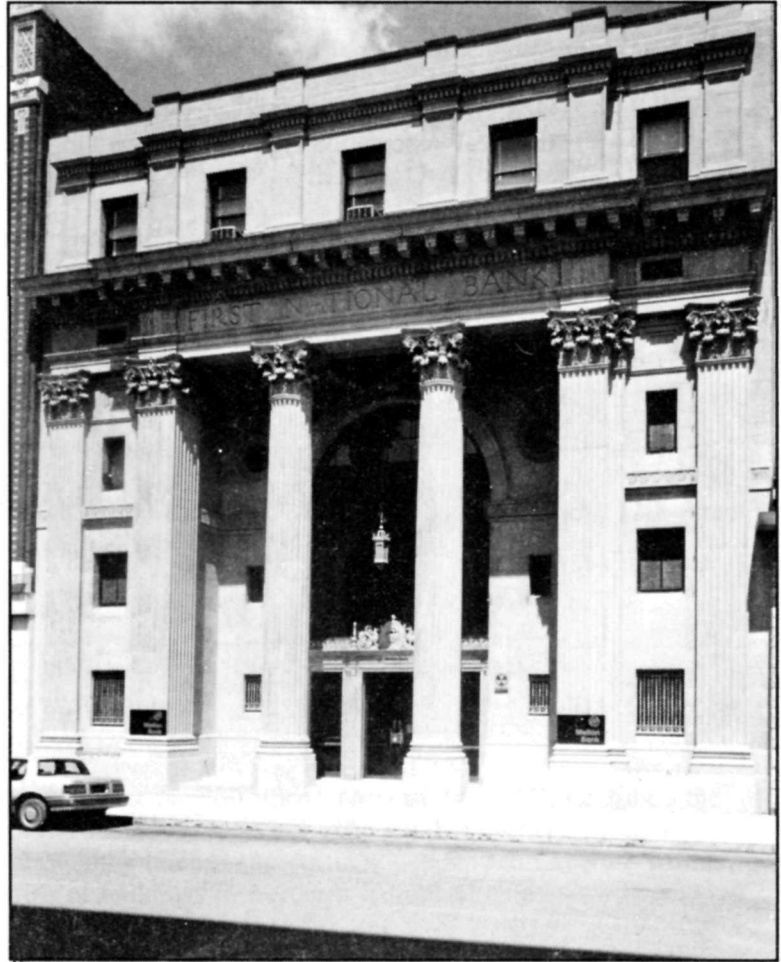


Fig. A.16 First National Bank, 1206 11th Ave.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: 1924-25. Ground was broken April 1, 1924, and construction was completed by the end of 1925. The building opened to the public January 16, 1926.
2. a. Architect: John A. Dempwolf of York, Pa., was responsible for the design; George Bradley, also of York, supervised the construction.

Born in Germany, John A. Dempwolf (1848-1928) moved to New York at an early age, attended the Cooper Union School, and later completed a two-year program in architecture at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He settled in York and soon gained a reputation as a leading designer of commercial and financial buildings. Noted examples of Dempwolf's work include the National Bank of York, York Trust Company, and the Colonial Hotel in York, and Evangelical churches in Johnstown and Steelton, Pa.

- b. Muralist: Gustave Ketterer of Philadelphia designed the murals in the banking room.
3. Original and subsequent owners: After lengthy negotiations between John Lloyd, president of First National Bank, and representatives of the Pennsylvania Railroad, the 60' x 120' site on 11th Avenue was purchased on February 11, 1922 for \$180,000--at the time the most expensive real estate transaction on record in Blair County.
4. Builder, contractor, suppliers: Over sixty sub-contractors supplied materials and/or assisted with the construction of the bank. Among these were the following local firms:

Lumber, roof construction, wood finishing: Fluke Co., Inc., 2605 Beale Ave.  
Lumber, crushed stone, sand: Sheesley Lumber and Supply Co., 1722 Margaret Ave.  
Fireproofing materials: Altoona Builder's Supply Co.  
Portland cement: Standard Supply and Equipment of Pennsylvania.  
Interior and exterior painting: S. A. Hite and Sons, 2510 7th Ave.  
Plaster and cement for floors: Blair Building Materials, Co., 1710 Margaret Ave.  
Glass and finishing hardware: W. H. Goodfellow's Sons, 1319 11th Ave.  
Plumbing: Trout and Taughenbaugh, 704 7th Ave.  
Electric wiring: Installed by J. Guy Schaeffer, 1701 11th Ave.  
Roofing: The Union Roofing Co.  
(Altoona Mirror [January 16, 1926], 22-3.)
5. Original plans and construction: In transverse section, this building is U-shaped, with a large, central light well over the three-story banking floor. Originally, the public banking area was lit by two rectangular, reinforced-concrete and stained-glass skylights measuring 16'x 44' each. The remaining two floors of offices rise at the front and rear of the building, flanking the area of the roof that originally contained the skylights.

Dempwolf's sophisticated plan organized public and private space around the central light well. Well out of public view, the rear portion of the third floor was devoted to female clerks' lockers, restrooms and kitchenettes, while the front of the third floor had administrative offices. On the fourth floor, the rear of the building was reserved for bookkeepers and typists, removing the crass sounds of business from the serene and artistic public banking room below.

The unlimited promise of the 1920s also was exemplified in the original conception of the bank. Plans called for a reinforced-concrete foundation and steel frame able to support up to six additional stories. A contemporary newspaper account anticipated that "as soon as there is sufficient demand for private office space, these stories will be added and then the building will assume its complete shape and tower above the adjacent buildings, making it the tallest building in the city." Likewise, bank officials originally intended to fill each of the six blank mural panels with scenes depicting the



unrivalled technological progress of the United States; only two of the panels were ever completed. (*Altoona Mirror* [January 15, 1926], 1.)

6. Alterations and additions:

The bank experimented with the scientific theories of color therapy and environmental psychology, painting the walls and ceiling of the banking floor "vitalizing French green" in 1946 to reduce customers' eye and nerve strain. ("First National Banking Room Redecorated," *Altoona Mirror* [June 8, 1945].)

In 1966, First National expanded its personal loan department into a portion of the first and mezzanine floors of the adjacent Lindfelter-Scott building (the contemporary name for the Silverman building), opening up an exterior wall to connect the new offices with the remainder of the bank. That entrance has subsequently been closed.

The stained-glass skylights, original lighting fixtures, and portions of the tellers' wickets were removed during a series of renovations in the 1960s and 1970s.

B. Historical Context:

The First National Bank was Altoona's second bank, organized in 1863 with William M. Lloyd as President. The first bank building, constructed in that same year, was located on the northeast corner of 11th Avenue and 12th Street, near where the I. D. A.

housing tower now stands. Lloyd already owned one bank, and in 1870 he organized the Mechanics Savings Bank, thus controlling all three financial institutions in the city at that time. First National Bank, moreover, maintained an exclusive financial relationship with the PRR, serving as its payroll depository and agent throughout much of the nineteenth century.

In 1925 First National began construction of a new headquarters on the site of the PRR



Fig. A.17 First National Bank, 1206 11th Ave., detail of bronze cartouche above main entrance.

supervisor's double house. The design, by architect John A. Dempwolf of York, followed the general conventions of 1920s bank buildings, deriving the primary facade from Roman or Greek antiquity, but freely adapting it, often in combination with elements from the French or English classical traditions. However, it was the architect's exceptional attention to detail inspired by local influences--as much as the Neoclassical architecture itself--that made the building an instant landmark and a source of tremendous local pride. Such details included an ornamental bronze locomotive over the bank's main entrance, and Gustave Ketterer's murals depicting "Transportation--Then and Now" in the main banking room. As one boosterist observer summed it up, "Altoona enjoys the reputation of having the best railroad mechanics and engineers in the country, and with the completion of this new bank building, it has been demonstrated that its builders of buildings can step forward into the first ranks." (Altoona Mirror [January 15, 1925], 1.)

First National Bank was one of three local banks to weather the Depression in sound financial shape. In 1931 the bank absorbed the First National Bank of Juniata, the first of several mergers and acquisitions that also included the Roaring Spring Bank in 1853, and Citizens National Bank of Hollidaysburg in 1960. In 1974, First National merged with Central Counties Bank, becoming a subsidiary of the Mellon National Corporation in 1983. The local bank is currently part of a network called Mellon Bank Central.

## PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

### A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: Ancient Roman architecture--specifically, a temple at Corgi, Italy--provided Dempwolf with the inspiration for the First National Bank. Due to its freely eclectic interpretation of historic precedents, however, the style subsequently has been noted by various commentators as "Renaissance" and "Greek."
2. Condition of fabric: Excellent.

### B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: The five-story, rectangular building measures about 60' x 120'.
2. Foundations: Granite.
3. Walls: The primary facade, of light pink artificial granite, has fluted, hand-carved Corinthian pilasters and columns 3'-6" in diameter, which rise three stories to a height of 33'. They support a frieze which reads "FIRST NATIONAL BANK," and a denticulated and modillioned cornice. The fourth story is hidden behind the frieze; a less adorned fifth story is crowned with a simpler cornice and parapet. The rear facade, which fronts an alley, is red brick laid in common bond. An arched setback provided access to the basement for coal deliveries and ash removal.
4. Structural systems, framing: Steel frame with 12" and 16" brick curtain walls.
5. Doorways and doors: The round-arched entrance is recessed 8 feet behind the massive columns. Originally, there were two sets of entrance doors with wrought-bronze and glass ornamental screens (these were sold for scrap in the 1960s). A second set of doors in the entrance lobby was fitted with bronze grilles. These original doors have

been replaced with modern glass and aluminum doors. Surmounting the entrance is an ornamental bronze cartouche with a locomotive in low relief, a symbol of Altoona's once predominant industry.

6. Roof: The flat roof is covered with built-up roofing.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans:

- a. First: The dramatic banking room, which measures 56' x 110' x 40' high, is lit on both ends by a large round-arched window flanked by two smaller rectangular windows.
- b. Second-Fifth: Typically, these floors have double-loaded corridors with offices and conference rooms on both sides of the hall.



Fig. A.18 First National Bank, 1206 11th Ave., interior, main banking floor, view to main entrance.

2. Stairways: The two stairways reflect the public/private divisions within the building. Located in the elevator lobby to the right of the entrance lobby, a marble staircase with an ornate newel post, twisted iron balusters, and a bronze handrail provides access to the upper offices, and descends to the vaults and safety deposit boxes in the basement. A second plain staircase located behind the tellers' desks serves the needs of employees.

3.     Flooring: The entrance vestibule and banking room are laid with gray Tennessee marble with a border of travertine and pink Tennessee marble; originally, the rest of the building had terrazzo, rubber tile, or linoleum flooring, most of which has been covered recently with wall-to-wall carpet.
4.     Wall and ceiling finish: The walls display a variety of plaster and marble treatments on their surfaces. The entrance vestibule has Italian travertine marble walls and a gilt, ornamental plaster ceiling. The first 10 feet of the north and south walls of the banking room are faced in Genevieve rose art marble; the walls are then finished to the ceiling with French Caen stone. The ceiling of the banking room has large, decorative cross beams that form rectangular panels, fifty-two in all. The panels are painted to depict Roman and modern coins, and allegorical figures representing various aspects of banking and finance. Set into similar rectangular frames, the two skylights were designed to blend with the rest the overall ceiling design.
5.     Openings:
  - a.     Doors: All of the mahogany doors in the banking room have two rectangular panels.
  - b.     Windows: The windows lighting the banking floor were originally fitted with amber panes to reduce glare and soften the natural light; they now have clear panes.
6.     Hardware: All of the doorknobs are stamped "FNB" in a circular cartouche.
7.     Original mechanical systems:
  - a.     Lighting: The building was equipped with electric lighting. On the banking floor, three large brass chandeliers, since removed, and a smaller brass chandelier, augmented natural light from the windows. The tellers' area was also illuminated with indirect lighting.
  - b.     Communications: Western Union telegraph and radio service was installed for broadcasting and receiving stock reports and other financial news.

### PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- A.     Original architectural drawings: None are known to survive.
- B.     Early views: The archives of the First National Bank, located in the building, contains several items of architectural interest, including:
  1.     Three photographs of the steel frame being erected, at various stages of completion. (The steel frame of the adjacent Silverman brothers building appears in two of the photos--an earlier third photo shows the PRR office building still standing on the corner of 11th Avenue and 12th Street.)
  2.     Several interior views by Gable Studios, ca. 1925, showing the stained-glass skylights and the original layout of the banking floor; the overstuffed furniture in the mezzanine

reception area; and the elaborate bronze grillework on the entrance doors.

3. A photograph captioned "compliments of Abe Cohen, 1931," provides a view of the 11th Avenue streetscape from the site where the U.S. post office was being built.

C. Interviews:

Michael L. Kilmer, assistant treasurer at Mellon Bank Central and unofficial bank historian. Interviews by Nancy Spiegel, Altoona, Pa., June 19, and August 4, 1989.

Leonard S. Fiore, contractor who renovated the bank in the 1960s. Interview by Nancy Spiegel, Altoona, Pa., July 20, 1989.

D. Bibliography:

1. Primary sources:

Altoona Mirror:

"Bank Will Erect Great Building," (February 6, 1924).

"First National Banking Room Remodeled," (June 8, 1945).

"First National in New Building" and "Altoona Contractors Who Made Possible This New Bank Building," (January 15, 1926).

"First National Will Expand Facilities," (January 11, 1966).

"Great Crowd at First National," (January 16, 1926). Describes the opening day festivities.

Building Record and Deeds, Blair County Courthouse, Hollidaysburg, Pa.

2. Secondary sources:

"First National Oldest Bank Here," Altoona Mirror (April 28, 1925).

Shedd, Nancy S. "Mellon Bank Central," in Robert L. Emerson, Allegheny Passage: An Illustrated History of Blair County. Woodland Hills, Calif.: Windsor Publications, 1984).

\_\_\_\_\_. "First National Bank of Altoona." Typescript, n.d., Altoona Mirror library.

Withey, Henry F. and Elsie Rathburn Withey. Biographical Dictionary of American Architects. (Los Angeles: Hennessey and Ingalls, Inc., 1970), biographical sketch of John A. Dempwolf.

Wolf, George A., ed. Blair County's First Hundred Years: 1846-1946. Altoona: The Mirror Press, 1945.



## BRETT BUILDING

HABS No. PA-5507



Fig. A.19 Brett Building, perspective of 11th Avenue facade.

Location: 1210-16 11th Ave., Altoona, Blair County, Pa.

Present Owner: Leonard S. Fiore, 5506 6th Ave., Altoona, Pa., 16602.

Present Use: A restaurant and architect's office on the first floor; offices on the second; apartments on the third, forth, and fifth floors.

Significance: Most of the early twentieth-century buildings in Altoona's commercial district have detailing derived from Neoclassical sources. Retail clothier Jacob Brett chose a more "modern" idiom for his prestigious new department store and office building. Designed in 1922 by Julian Millard of Altoona, the Brett Building is one of the few downtown buildings that exhibit the design elements seen in the Chicago School of architecture -- vertical, tripartite zones; the division of the intermediate stories into vertical bands; and the use of low-relief, terra cotta ornamentation, especially at the cornice. Moreover, both the architect and the building's owner were influential on the state level: Brett was a prominent businessman, originally from Lithuania; and Millard, a widely respected architect, was named Pennsylvania's first Supervising Architect in 1924.

### PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

#### A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: 1922-24. Construction began October 1, 1922. The store opened

March 6, 1924.

2. Architect: Julian Millard of Altoona was the architect. David Royer of Millard's firm (later the architect of the second U.S. Post Office) served as the project architect. Carol Hickey of Lancaster, Pa., was the consulting architect in charge of the 1984 restoration.

In Altoona's city directories, Julian Millard (d. 1951) advertised that he could--and would--build "anything." His firm's most important contribution to the Altoona streetscape, however, was probably the introduction of a conservative Chicago Style of architecture, as exemplified by the Brett Building and others like it. Millard was born in Three Rivers, Michigan and educated at the University of Michigan. After graduating with a degree in architecture from Boston Institute of Technology, he worked in his father's firm in Phoenix for five years, designing the Bank of Arizona and Carnegie Free Library at Phoenix. The renovation of the Blair County Courthouse brought Millard to Hollidaysburg, Pa., in 1907. He opened offices in the Hutchison Building in Altoona and soon gained a reputation as an architect of churches, schools, and commercial buildings.

Millard practiced in Altoona from 1907 until 1923, when he left to serve as Pennsylvania's first State Supervising Architect in Harrisburg, a post he held until 1932. The style of his commercial and institutional buildings can best be described as "functional" and "modern"--typically red brick, with flat wall surfaces, stylized pilasters, and applied terra cotta ornament at the cornice. Major examples of his work include the Theodore Roosevelt Junior High School and the Altoona Mirror Building on Green Avenue. In addition, Millard was probably responsible for the design of Jacob Brett's large, Prairie-style residence on Logan Boulevard in Llyswen, and other related examples on Broad Avenue. These attributions are based on stylistic evidence alone, documentation to support these claims is lacking.

Millard was also active in the community. He belonged to the Chamber of Commerce, Masons, Rotary Club, and Art Institute, and was a member of the Blair Hotel Company's Building Committee, which was responsible for selecting the design and materials used in the construction of the Penn Alto Hotel. (Millard obituary, Altoona Mirror [September 25, 1951]; see also Mirror [December 19, 1923 and June 28, 1932].)

3. Original and subsequent owners: On June 6, 1922, Jacob Brett acquired the site from the Pennsylvania Railroad Company for \$154,000. The purchase price included the three-story, Italianate superintendent's residence that was razed to make way for the Brett Building later in 1922. Although the property changed hands during the 1960s and 1970s, it remained in the Brett family until 1979, when declining sales--partially the result of the demolition of several adjoining commercial shops--forced the store to close. The Brett Building was sold to its current owner in 1986. (For the complete chain of title, see deed books: 290/523; 312/148; 334/365; 992/916; 1021/827; and 1037/37)
4. Contractor, suppliers:  
  
Structural engineer: W. A. Hoyt, Central Trust Building, Altoona  
Structural steel and steel stairs: Furnished and erected by Altoona Pipe and Steel Co.,  
1925 9th Ave.  
Facing bricks: Altoona Brick Co.  
Marble and tile work: Altoona Marble and Tile, 1114 1/2 12th St.

Plaster, sand, finishing lime: Furnished by Collins-Harter Supply Co., 1004 4th Ave., Juniata

Glass and finishing hardware: W. H. Goodfellow's Sons, 1319 11th Ave.

Paint and varnishes: Altoona Glass and Paint Co., 1315 12th Ave.

Plumbing fixtures: Tierney and Sons, 809 17th St.

Decorative painting: Art Craft Studio

(Altoona Mirror, [March 5, 1924], 19-29.)

5. Original plans and construction: The Brett Building was constructed to house Brett's Department Store on the basement, first, and mezzanine floors. The three upper floors had offices, twenty-two on each floor, and a penthouse containing four additional offices. On the exterior, a terra cotta stringcourse marked the different uses, visually separating the commercial stores on the first floor from the offices on the second through fifth. The storefronts and interior have been renovated many times, although the original office plan appears to be unaltered.

Like the First National Bank (1924-25), Penn Alto Hotel (1920-21), and Silverman Building (1924-25), which were also constructed during the boom decade of the 1920s, the Brett Building anticipated the possibility of future expansion. The structure was built so that up to two additional stories could be added at a later date.

6. Alterations and additions: Like the ever-changing fashions of the goods sold within the store, the Brett Building itself was constantly being updated to pique the curiosity and interest of the consuming public. As early as 1925, a large electric sign spelling "BRETT'S" in different colors was erected on the building. Again, in 1927, the Altoona Mirror noted that the selling floors had undergone renovation. In 1931, the basement store was enlarged 40' back to the alley; this necessitated the reduction of the stockroom area. A concrete fur storage vault ("the kind usually reserved for big cities") measuring 25' x 42' was installed in the basement in 1935. (Altoona Mirror: [June 4, 1925, 24; March 15, 1927; February 10, 1931; April 16, 1935])

Brett's underwent extensive interior remodelings in the 1940s. A photograph from an August 19, 1942, article in the Altoona Mirror shows the entire mezzanine railing covered with plaster; only the top of the original oak handrail is visible. The right stairway to the mezzanine was also removed at this time. Renovations in 1946 included the replacement of the floor and wall display cases, relocation of offices, and installation of new, shadowless fluorescent lights. New departments were also created to focus the customer's attention on promising lines of goods. (Altoona Mirror: [June 8, 1941; June 20, 1946])

In 1956, Brett's opened a men's specialty store on the southwest side of the building. The shop had its own entrance off 11th Avenue and a "discreet" side entrance in the court to the left of the store. The walls of the men's shop had cypress panels; the floor was laid in tile.

In 1966, Brett's received an Indiana limestone storefront with seven display cubicles capped by copper-lined, aluminum awnings. The display windows were shallow, almost flush with the sidewalk. The selling floor was expanded to include the original lobby area.

The Brett and adjacent Central Trust Buildings were cleaned and restored in 1984. After a careful search for historical materials, Brett's storefront was restored to its

earliest documented appearance--ca. late 1930s. The first and mezzanine floors were renovated to accommodate new commercial shops and a restaurant; in some cases, this involved the removal of original interior walls, and the blocking of some original partitions. Some of the offices on the upper floors were remodeled, while others were converted into luxury apartments.

B. Historical Context:

Born in Lithuania, Jacob Brett came to Altoona in 1891, opening his first women's clothing store at 1309 11th Ave., in 1914. When the store could no longer expand, Brett purchased the site of the PRR superintendent's house, which he razed, and began work on the five-story Brett Building.

In order for Brett to build on the 11'-wide lot that the Central Trust Company had acquired next to his building, Brett agreed to tie the floors of his building to those of Central Trust, and provide access to both. According to an agreement between the two parties, Central Trust would construct the first story of the connecting stair tower and install one elevator. Brett would finance the construction of the upper stories and install a second elevator in the lobby. The upper floors of the Brett Building were leased to the Central Trust Company, which became responsible for their care and operation. This deal explains why the plaque on the stair tower reads "CENTRAL TRUST BUILDING," although it was clearly constructed as part of the Brett Building.

When it opened March 6, 1924, Brett's Department Store was described as a "magnificent merchandizing emporium." Indeed, the store had a carefully worked out merchandizing strategy. "One flight down to lower prices" was the slogan for the basement store, which was devoted to less-expensive, ready-to-wear lines and linens. The basement was the least attractive part of the store, but it drew customers anyway because it featured goods that were considered inexpensive or essential. The first floor had silks, clothing, lingerie, and leather goods, along with small, impulse items such as hosiery, cosmetics, and perfume.<sup>11</sup>

The store's curved stairway and elegant mezzanine design enticed customers to the upper floor, where the most expensive clothing lines were displayed. These items included "high class coats, millinery, gowns, and shoes," according to an early newspaper advertisement. All of the merchandise was originally kept in glass cases and displayed on racks when customers requested to see specific items. Overall, the amenities of the department store--hand-painted wall and ceiling murals, statuary lamps, Persian rugs, mahogany furnishings, etc.--helped to equate shopping with a genteel way of life.<sup>12</sup>

Brett remained active in the day-to-day business of the store until 1962; he died two years later at the age of 87. Brett's Department Store continued to occupy the building until 1979, when it closed its doors for good. In 1984 the building was listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

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<sup>11</sup>"New Brett Store to Open Thursday," Altoona Mirror, (March 5, 1924).

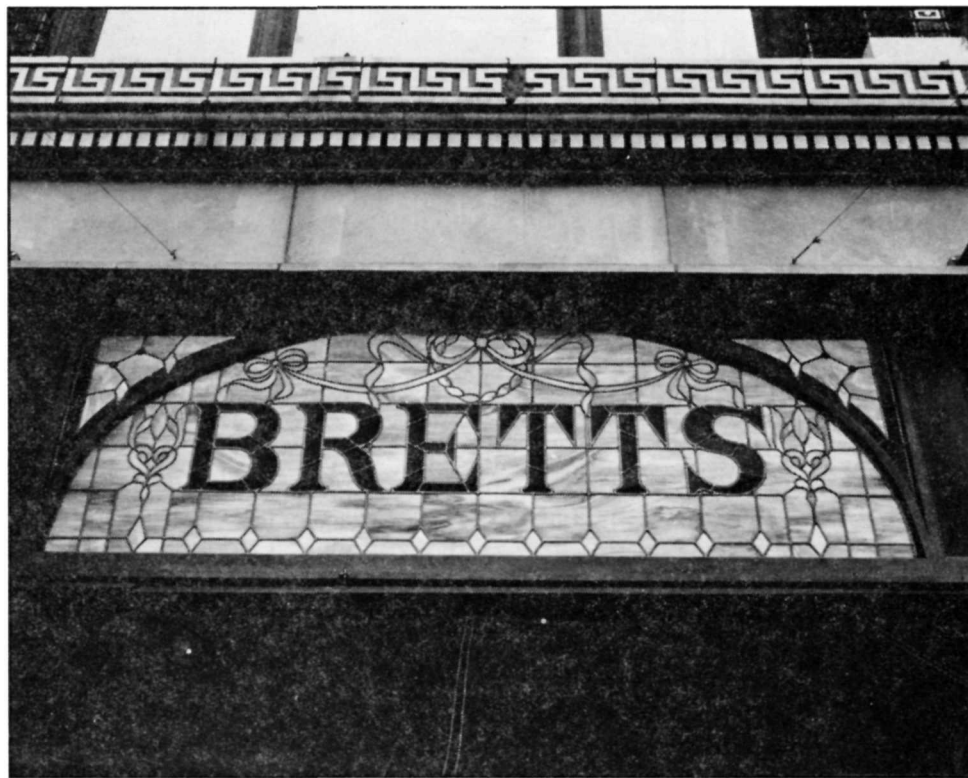
<sup>12</sup>Altoona Mirror (March 5, 1924). Susan Porter Benson, "Palace of Consumption and Machine for Selling: The American Department Store, 1880-1940," Radical History Review 21 (Fall 1979): 199-221.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION**A. General Statement:**

1. Architectural character: The building's flat, red-brick facade is highlighted with glazed headers and low-relief, glazed terra cotta ornamentation. Four pilasters help give a vertical emphasis to the design.
2. Condition of fabric: Excellent.

**B. Description of Exterior:**

1. Overall dimensions: The five-story, I-shaped building measures 70' x 120'; the attached entrance to the Central Trust Building at 1216 11th Ave. measures 11' x 120'.
2. Foundations: Not visible.
3. Walls: The storefronts are restored to resemble their ca. 1930s appearance. They have black awnings above the plate-glass front, and a clerestory transom window with an inset, stained-glass panel that reads "BRETT'S." The upper stories are finished in deep red tapestry brick laid in Flemish bond with glazed headers. This portion of the facade consists of six bays separated into four sections by pilasters with stylized, terra cotta ornament. The pilasters extend from the top of the first story to the top of the fifth story. The upper portion of the building, above the fifth story, is ornamented with blue and white glazed terra cotta designs and the words "BRETT BUILDING." The side



**Fig. A.20** Brett Building, detail of sign over north entrance on 11th Avenue facade.



facing the Central Trust Building is laid in buff brick in running bond. The rear facade is red brick laid in common bond. The first story of the stair tower and elevator lobby is finished with glazed terra cotta in a regularly coursed, ashlar pattern with rusticated joints. Its upper stories match the rest of the Brett Building.

4. Structural systems, framing: Steel and reinforced-concrete with 16" brick curtain walls.
5. Openings:
  - a. Doorways and doors: The main entranceway, which contains a pair of glass and aluminum doors, is recessed behind the new storefront. There is a secondary entrance to the restaurant from the court between Brett's and the Central Trust Building. The entrance to the stair tower is round-arched, with limestone voussoirs and an ornamental keystone. The tympanum of the arch is infilled with a fixed-transom sash.
  - b. Windows: The original storefront was fitted with 40' x 40' plate-glass windows which were described as the "finest and classiest" display windows in Altoona. The upper stories have rectangular window openings, with tripartite, Chicago-style sash. These consist of three one-over-one-light, double-hung sash topped with three single-light, fixed transoms. The windows on the side and rear facades have concrete sills.
6. Roof: A parapet wall with tile coping obscures the false wood roof.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans:
  - a. First: The main entrance leads to a deep inner vestibule and a second set of glass and aluminum doors. Several short steps lead down to the sunken first floor, which was originally the department store selling floor.
  - b. Mezzanine: The mezzanine, which encircles the entire store, was originally reached by two stairways located on either side of the first-floor entranceway. Only the left stairway remains. This floor was also occupied by the offices of the cashier, telephone exchange, and advertising department. In addition, an arcade connecting Brett's with the Central Trust Building was at one time accessible from this floor; it has since been removed. Several interior walls have also been removed to accommodate Ellsworth's restaurant, which opened in 1986.
  - c. Third-Fifth: The typical floor plan consists of double-loaded, I-shaped corridors with offices (or apartments) on both sides. These rooms vary in size, but the majority measure 14' x 20'. Fire doors connect the third through fifth floors of the Brett Building to those of the Central Trust Building, which also contain offices and/or apartments.
2. Stairways: A steel stairway providing access to the upper floors is located in the elevator lobby to the left of the building. The stairway has marble treads, an oak handrail, and turned metal balusters. The stairway to the mezzanine has an oak handrail and a cast-iron, Gothic-arched baluster design. A third, concrete stairway

located in the southwest corner of the building, serves as an interior fire escape leading to the ground floor.

3. **Flooring:** The entrance vestibule was originally laid in red tile; the first floor had a birch floor; the mezzanine floor was covered with Persian rugs. The first and mezzanine floors now have wall-to-wall carpet; the upper floors have marble hallways. The stair tower has a marble floor as well.
4. **Wall and ceiling finish:** The entrance vestibule originally had "high class paintings" on the walls and ceiling; these were restored during the 1984 renovation. The rest of the building has plaster walls and ceilings. The first and mezzanine floors are now painted teal and mauve and have wallpaper friezes.



Fig. A.21 Brett Building, interior. Entry gallery and door into Ellsworth's Restaurant, looking northwest from 11th Avenue entrance.

5. **Openings:**
  - a. **Doorways and doors:** Typical interior doors have two rectangular panels, and flat, wood surrounds. The second- through fifth-floor doorways have tripartite, rectangular transoms that extend beyond the door on either side.
  - b. **Windows:** New storefront on the first floor; the windows of the upper stories are surrounded by flat wood frames.
  - c. **Skylights:** There are two bands of skylights in the roof over the mezzanine floor. Originally, they were of domed, wire glass; during the 1984 renovation, however, the skylight openings were replaced with flat sash.

6. Original furnishings: A grand-opening announcement noted that the department store was "fully furnished with mahogany furniture."
7. Mechanical systems:
  - a. Heating: Vapor steam vacuum system.
  - b. Lighting: A variety of elegant and dramatic "ornamental lamps" were located on all floors. The entrance vestibule had four lamps with hand-painted shades; the stairway down to the basement store was flanked by several "marble statuary lamps" which added dignity to this less attractive area.
  - c. Air conditioning: In July 1939, Brett's installed a York air-conditioning system capable of producing 20 tons of ice a day.
- D. Site: The Brett Building stands on 11th Avenue, facing southeast. It shares a party wall with the First National Bank of Altoona.

### PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- A. Original architectural drawings: An original blueprint drawing of the fifth-floor plan signed by Julian Millard is in the possession of Leonard S. Fiore, 5506 6th Ave., Altoona, Pa.
- B. Early views:
  1. According to Leonard Fiore, the earliest views of the Brett Building date to the 1930s or early 1940s. The personal collection of Donny Brett (c/o Meyer Jonasson, 1226 11th Ave., Altoona), provided the major source of information for the 1984 restoration project.
  2. A photograph captioned "compliments of Abe Cohen, 1931," provides a view of the 11th Avenue streetscape. In this view, Brett's storefront seems to closely resemble the current restoration. Collection of Mellon Bank Central, Altoona, Pa.
- C. Interview: Leonard Fiore, Jr., contractor for the 1984 renovation and present owner, interview by Nancy Spiegel, Altoona, Pa., July 20, 1989.
- D. Bibliography:
  1. Primary sources:  
Altoona Mirror:  

"Attractive Interior of Remodelled Brett's," (August 19, 1941).

"Big Realty Deal is Consummated," (June 27, 1922).

"Brett's Begins Remodeling," (February 2, 1956).

"Brett's Plan Two-Floor Modernization," (June 20, 1946).

"Brett's Store is Being Enlarged," (February 10, 1931).

"Brett's Store One of City's Finest," (April 28, 1925).

"First Floor of Brett's Changed," (June 8, 1941).

Millard, Julian. Obituary. (September 25, 1951).

"Modern Building Planned by Brett," (August 30, 1922).

"New Brett Store to Open Thursday," (March 5, 1924). This issue includes a ten-page advertising supplement by Brett's.

"Pennsy is Selling Supts.' Residence," (June 25, 1921).

"Ribbon Cutting at Brett's New Store Planned," (May 17, 1966).

"Sign is Illuminated," (June 4, 1925).

"Workmen Begin Remodeling Brett's Store," (January 1, 1966).

Deed Books. Blair County Courthouse, Hollidaysburg, Pa.

Insurance Maps of Altoona, Blair County, Pennsylvania. New York: Sanborn Map Co., 1909.

Insurance Maps of Altoona...Pennsylvania. New York: Sanborn Map Co., 1932.

2. Secondary sources:

Benson, Susan Porter. "Palace of Consumption and Machine for Selling: The American Department Store, 1880-1940." Radical History Review 21 (Fall 1979): 199-221.

O'Bannon, Patrick W. National Register Nomination for the Central Trust Company Buildings, 1984.

E. Additional Sources:

1. For more information on the restoration project, one should contact Carol Hickey (230 Harrisburg Ave., Lancaster, Pa., 17603), who served as the architect for the restoration.
2. Altoona Morning Tribune (June 28, 1922; October 12, December 18, 1923; and March 6, 1924 [opening]) were unavailable in Altoona, but should be consulted for additional information on the construction of the Brett Building.

**CENTRAL TRUST COMPANY BUILDING**  
HABS No. PA-5508

Location: 1218 11th Ave.,  
Altoona, Blair  
County, Pa.

Present Owner: Brett/Central Trust  
Associates, c/o  
Leonard S. Fiore,  
5506 6th Ave.,  
Altoona, Pa., 16602.

Present Use: Vacant on the first  
floor and mezzanine  
levels; apartments on  
the third through  
fifth floors.

Significance: The Central Trust  
Company Building is a  
rare, intact example of  
Altoona's early twentieth-  
century commercial archi-  
tecture. Designed by the  
Pittsburgh architectural  
firm of Robinson and  
Winkler, and erected by  
Altoona's premier contrac-  
tor, P. W. Finn and Co., the  
structure was among the  
more outstanding office  
buildings produced during  
the 1900s, a decade of  
rapid growth and prosper-  
ity. The facade, of white  
glazed brick with brown-  
stone trim, displays both  
Beaux Arts and Romanesque  
detailing. Until the 1960s,  
the building served as the  
headquarters of an impor-  
tant local financial insti-  
tution, Central Trust Com-  
pany, which traced its ori-  
gins to the Altoona Bank,  
a private bank founded in  
1872.



Fig. A.22 Central Trust Company Building, perspective of 11th Avenue facade.

**PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION**

**A. Physical History:**

1. Date of erection: 1905-06. The cornerstone was laid April 8, 1905. The building opened to the public March 5, 1906.
2. Architect: The Pittsburgh firm of Charles M. Robinson (formerly of Altoona) and George Winkler.





Fig. A.23 Central Trust Company Building, 1218 11th Ave., detail of first-floor facade.

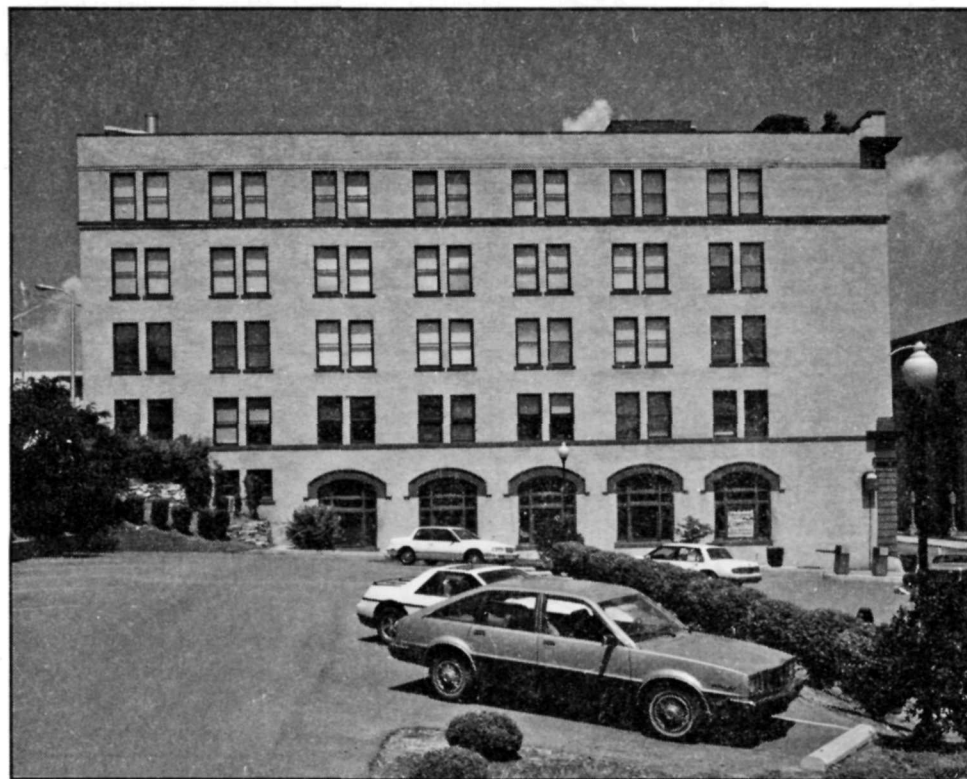


Fig. A.24 Central Trust Company Building, 1218 11th Ave., southwest facade.

3. Original and subsequent owners: In 1979, the building was sold to John Rawlings for \$26,000. It was purchased by the current owner in 1986.
4. Contractor: P. W. Finn of Altoona.
5. Original plans and construction: The building was constructed to house banking activities on the first and mezzanine levels. The third-fifth floors had suites of offices, fifteen to a floor. On the exterior, the banking floor is marked by a massive brownstone and granite street-level facade. Except for the changes to the main banking room, the original plan remains intact.
6. Alterations and additions: In 1922-24, the stair tower of the Brett Building was constructed against the northeast facade of the Central Trust Building. Since Brett's was designed with a light well, only the windows in the first and second bays of the Central Trust Building had to be blocked up. Through-passages were cut to connect the upper floors of offices, and new elevators to service both buildings were installed in the stair tower.

The Central Trust building and adjacent Brett Building were the focus of a major restoration project in 1984. In addition to restoring the windows to their original appearance (removing glass block, paint, etc.), the entrance doors were replaced and the inner vestibule altered. On the interior, a drop ceiling was pulled down, revealing an elaborate plasterwork ceiling that was carefully restored with fiberglass castings. All of the tellers' wickets and the original staircase were removed, although the original bank vaults remain in place.



Fig. A.25 Central Trust Company Building, 1218 11th Ave., interior northwest (back) end of main banking room, looking northwest.

**B. Historical Context:**

The Altoona Bank, a private bank, was organized in 1872 by a group of wealthy businessmen. It occupied a three-story brick building erected on this site in 1875. In 1902 the Altoona Bank merged with the Central Pennsylvania Trust Company, and took the name of the latter until 1904, when it became the Central Trust Company. In 1905 the bank began construction of the present building, which was completed in mid 1906.

In the 1920s, the Central Trust Company served as a clearing house for the seven major banks in Altoona. Checks drawn on local banks were sorted, totalled, and presented to the member banks each morning when the clearing house met at Central Trust. Central Trust was one of only three Altoona banks to survive the Depression.

In 1959, the Central Trust Company merged with Altoona Trust Company to form the Altoona Central Bank and Trust Company. When this organization merged with the first Bellefonte Bank and Trust Company in 1966, its name was changed to Mid-State Bank and Trust Company. The Central Trust Building housed some offices of Mid-State Bank until the 1980s.

This building is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

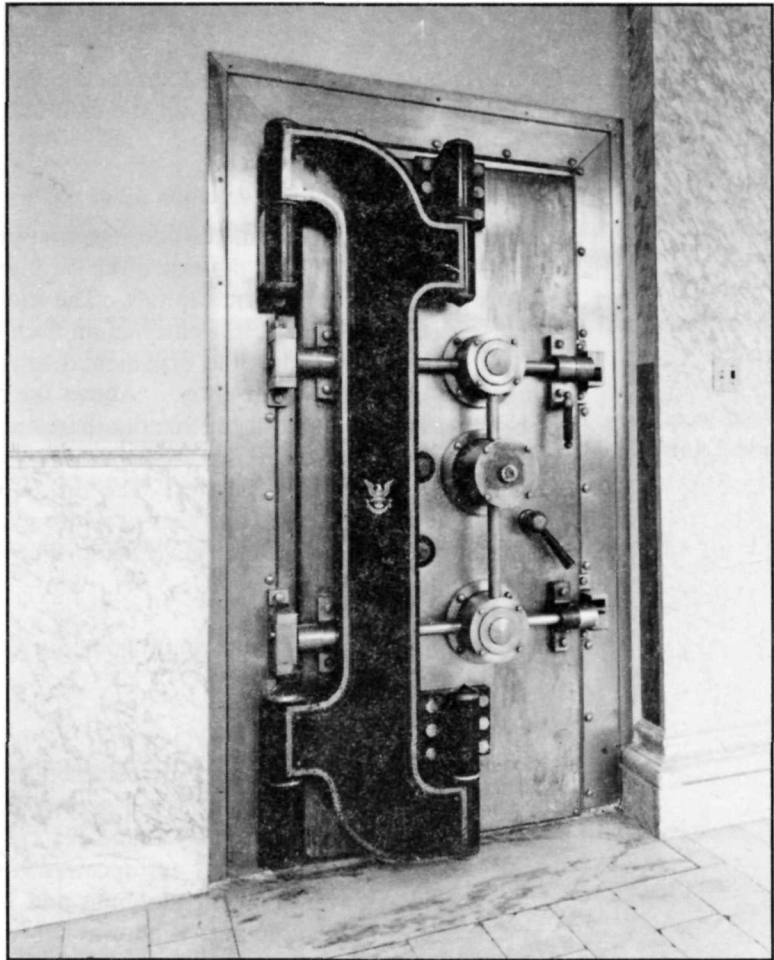


Fig. A.26 Central Trust Company Building, 1218 11th Ave., interior, vault door on southwest wall.

**PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION****A. General Statement:**

1. Architectural character: The facade of the Central Trust Building exhibits the characteristics of both the Romanesque and Beaux Arts styles. The white glazed-brick exterior is complemented by a massive, brownstone facade and brownstone trim.
2. Condition of fabric: Very good.

**B. Description of Exterior:**

1. Overall dimensions: The five-story, rectangular building measures 38' (three bays on 11th Avenue) x 120' (six bays on the side facing 13th Street).
2. Foundations: Granite.
3. Walls: On the 11th Avenue facade, the first story is of smooth-faced brownstone laid in a regularly coursed ashlar pattern. The bays are framed by two large, rusticated brownstone piers with Doric capitals. The piers support a brownstone entablature which arches over the central entry as an archivolt, and is topped by a central, ball finial. A clock sits within the ornamental brownstone wreath that occupies the tympanum above the main entry. Above the first story, the facade is divided into three bays by four pilasters with brownstone bases and capitals. Three round-headed arches spring from the capitals. The arches are ornamented with molded brickwork and prominent brownstone keystones. The fifth story is topped by a brownstone entablature. The side and rear facades are also of white glazed brick. Brownstone beltcourses extend across both of these facades between the first and second floors, and the fourth and fifth floors.
4. Structural system: Steel and reinforced-concrete frame.
5. Openings:
  - a. Doorways and doors: The recessed main entranceway, in the second bay, is flanked by engaged, polished granite columns with Ionic capitals.
  - b. Windows: The central entranceway is flanked by two segmentally arched windows with archivolt moldings and pronounced keystones. The second-fourth stories have three-part windows with brownstone sills. The fourth-story windows are round-arched. The fifth story has three pairs of flat-arched windows. On the side facade, the windows have segmentally arched openings and brownstone sills. The first-story windows are also topped by archivolt moldings of brownstone. The windows on the rear facade have flat arches and brownstone sills.
6. Roof:
  - a. Shape: Flat.
  - b. Cornice: The facade is crowned by a brownstone cornice and a cartouche with the initials "C.T.C."

**C. Description of Interior:**

1. Floor plans:
  - a. First: The main banking floor comprises most of the first floor. Tellers' wickets, since removed, apparently lined the left side of the room; evidence of their presence remains on the marble floor. There are two smaller meeting rooms in the rear of the building.

- b. Mezzanine: Several smaller rooms, now unfinished, and a restroom, are located in the rear of the building.
  - c. Third-fifth: The upper stories consist of double-loaded corridors with apartments on each side.
- 2. Stairways: In addition to the main stairway, which was removed in 1922-24, there are two smaller stairways leading to the mezzanine rooms. Both have brass handrails, cast-iron balusters, and marble treads.
- 3. Flooring: Marble in the inner vestibule and banking floor; carpeting in the small rooms nearest the Brett Building. The upper floors have marble hallways.
- 4. Wall and ceiling finish: Plaster on lath. The banking floor has a marble wainscot with three marble pilasters on each of the side walls. The ceiling of the main banking floor has an elaborate cornice with an egg-and-dart motif.
- 5. Openings: The typical interior doors have one rectangular panel and simple, Neoclassical surrounds.
- 6. Mechanical systems:
  - a. Heating: Steam.
  - b. Lighting: All original fixtures have been replaced by new brass fixtures.
- D. Site: The building faces southeast on 11th Avenue.

### PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- A. Original architectural drawings: None located.
- B. Early views: Postcard view of the Central Trust Building from the east, showing the northeast facade before the Brett Building was constructed. Collection of the Main Street Manager, Altoona, Pa.
- C. Interview: Leonard Fiore, Jr., contractor for the 1984 restoration and present owner, interview by Nancy Spiegel, July 20, 1989.
- D. Bibliography:
  - 1. Primary sources:
    - Insurance Maps of Altoona, Pennsylvania. New York: Sanborn-Perris Co., 1894.
    - Insurance Maps of Altoona, Blair County, Pennsylvania. New York: Sanborn Map Co., 1909.



2. Secondary sources:

Clark, Charles B. Illustrated Altoona. Altoona: Privately printed, 1896.

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## JAGGARD BUILDING

(Klevan Building)  
HABS No. PA-5509

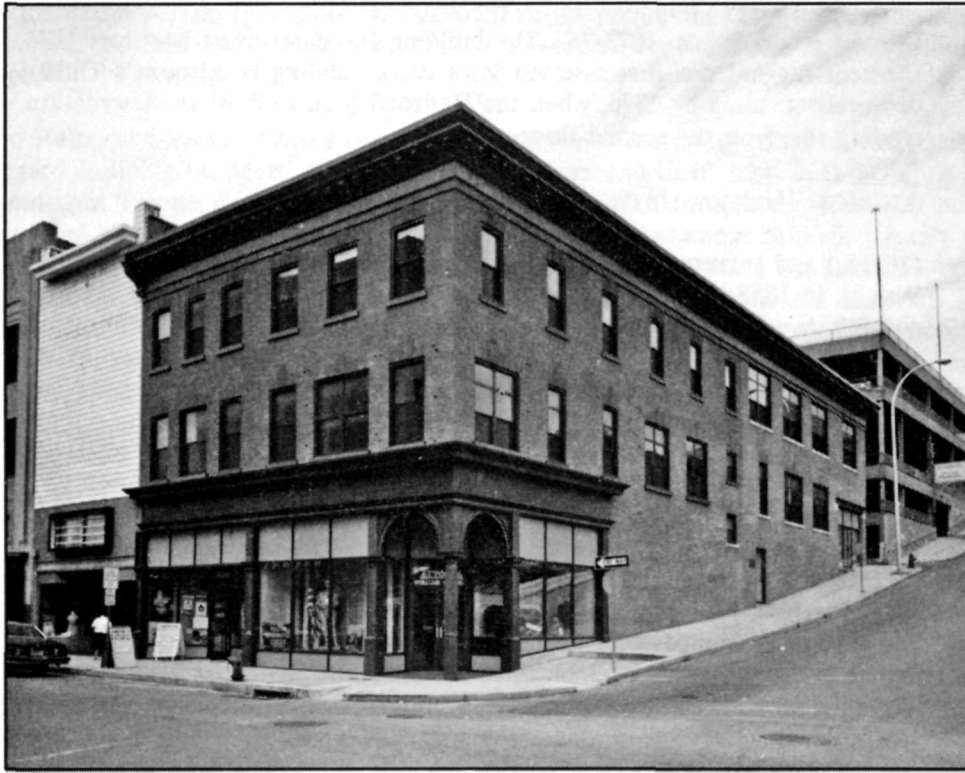


Fig. A.27 Jaggard Building, perspective of corner at 11th Avenue and 13th Street, looking west.

Location: 1300-02 11th Ave. (northwest corner of 13th Street and 11th Avenue), Altoona, Blair County, Pa.

Present Owner: H. F. H. Enterprises, c/o Harry Fouse, R. D. 2, Hollidaysburg, Pa.

Present Use: Altoona's visitors' information center and a store occupy the first floor. The second and third floors are vacant.

Significance: The Jaggard Building is good example of the kind of brick commercial buildings that were constructed by Altoona's wealthiest businessmen in the 1870s. It is also one of the few remaining nineteenth-century commercial structures to retain its original appearance, although the first-floor storefront is new, the result of a recent restoration. Erected ca. 1873-76 to house the dry goods store of merchant Clement Jaggard (the exclusive agent for John Wright in the disposition of Altoona's original lots), the building was once attached to a row of similar, three-story brick stores that have been demolished. The Jaggard Building was later occupied by the offices of the Railroad Men's Christian Association, one of the examples of benevolent paternalism offered workers by the Pennsylvania Railroad Company.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

## A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: ca. 1873-76. The building can date no earlier than 1873, when Clement Jaggard was first assessed for a brick building in Altoona's Third Ward. It was definitely standing by 1876, when the Railroad Men's Christian Association opened a reading room on the second floor.
2. Architect: Unknown.
3. Original and subsequent owners: Jaggard purchased the lot from his father-in-law, John Wright, in 1858. The sale, which included several other parcels of land--some on 13th and 8th Avenues--amounted to \$4,658. (Deed Book I/170) In 1890 most of Jaggard's estate passed to Clara J. Pugh (probably his daughter), who sold the building to Phillip Klevan, a longtime tenant, in 1941. (Deed Book 461/294) The Jaggard Building was sold to the present owner in 1986 for \$25,000.
4. Builder, contractor, suppliers: Unknown.
5. Original plans and construction: Originally, the building was about 60' long--one half of its present length. The extant roof framing, and 1882 and 1888 maps suggest that originally Nos. 1300 and 1302 were two attached buildings that shared a party wall, but had separately framed roofs and separate entrances. By 1878, No. 1300 housed Clement Jaggard's dry goods business on the first floor, and "halls, etc." on the second and third. The original plan has been obscured by numerous nineteenth- and twentieth-century renovations.
6. Alterations and additions: Ca. 1890-93, a 60' brick addition extended the building back to the alley. Phillip and Myer Klevan, who established their retail shoe business on the first floor in 1923, altered the facade and the interior in 1929, doubling the size of the selling floor and enlarging the window display area. In 1941, their enlargements again doubled the size of the selling floor. Renovations in 1946 included a new storefront and an entirely new face on the building. (Wolf, 471) Subsequent commercial enterprises have changed the storefronts several times.

A restoration in the 1980s added a new first-floor storefront with a cast-metal cornice and mauve kick plates. A secondary entrance in the center of the 13th Street facade was bricked up.

## B. Historical Context:

The building was constructed for Clement Jaggard (d. 1890) one of Altoona's most prominent merchants and landholders. Jaggard was the son-in-law of PRR Director John Wright, the civil engineer who laid out the town of Altoona. Wright, who remained in Philadelphia, employed Jaggard as his resident agent in the disposition of all town lots. Jaggard lived on the East Side at 1411 6th Ave., but most of his commercial enterprises were on the opposite side of the railroad tracks. In 1851, he began business in a modest frame building on 10th Avenue between 13th and 14th streets. By the time of his death in 1890, however, his vast land holdings had grown to include contiguous brick offices at Nos. 1300-02, 1304-06-08 and 1309-11; a frame store at 1508 11th Ave., and several lots on 10th Avenue, in addition to his properties on the

East Side.<sup>13</sup> In the 1880s, No. 1304 housed a musical instruments store; No. 1306, a novelty store and the offices of the YMCA on the second floor; and No. 1308 had a restaurant. In 1894, the Jaggard Building had three stores on the first floor and the offices of the Railroad "Y" on the second. The third floor was devoted to the Mountain City Business College. By 1916, however, the Railroad "Y" occupied the entire second floor and had its gymnasium on the third.<sup>14</sup>

The Railroad Men's Christian Association established a reading room on the second floor of the Jaggard Building on March 16, 1876. It was the second of its kind in the country; the first was founded in Tyrone, Pennsylvania, a few years earlier. This interest in Christian benevolence coincided with a general wave of religious enthusiasm that swept through the city between 1875 and 1876, following the national panic of 1873. Like the YMCA, the Railroad "Y" provided recreational facilities and activities as well as educational programs and materials for its members. Railroad management represented the association as the moral alternative to saloons and the halls of the railroad brotherhoods and fraternal lodges. Throughout the nineteenth century, however, membership in the "Y" was contingent upon two factors: being employed by the PRR and belonging to one of Altoona's evangelical, Protestant churches. The "Y" moved to new quarters at 1220 8th Ave. in the late 1920s.

Most of the people in Altoona know this building as the Klevan Building, after Phillip and Myer Klevan's retail shoe business, which operated from 1923 until the 1960s.

## PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

### A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: The three-story, red-brick building has flat wall surfaces with no ornamentation other than splayed lintels and a projecting metal cornice.
2. Condition of fabric: Good. The brick has been sandblasted and repointed during a recent restoration.

### B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: The three-story, rectangular brick building measures approximately 42' (six bays on 11th Avenue) x 120' (ten bays on 13th Street).
2. Foundations: Not visible.
3. Walls: The flat, red-brick walls have no surface ornamentation other than splayed lintels above the windows on the street and avenue facades. There is a subtle, vertical seam on the 13th Street facade where the ca. 1890 addition was joined to the older part of the building.
4. Structural systems, framing: The building has brick-bearing walls laid in common bond. The oldest part of the roof (over the southwest portion of the building) is framed with

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<sup>13</sup>Tax assessments for Clement Jaggard's estate, 1890, Blair County Courthouse, Hollidaysburg. His properties in the Third Ward alone were valued at \$81,500.

<sup>14</sup>City directories, 1880-1920, *passim*.

common rafters and a ridge board running parallel to 13th Street; the rest of the building has a flat roof with wood joists reinforced with steel beams.

5. Openings:

- a. Doorways and doors: The primary entrance at the corner of 11th Avenue and 13th Street is recessed behind two cast-metal arches supported by two piers and one freestanding Doric column. A secondary entrance at the alley end of the 13th Street facade provides access to the rear of the building.
- b. Windows: The windows have flat arches and splayed brick lintels on the street and avenue facades. Although some of the windows have been replaced with larger ones, the lintels remain a constant size. New windows with fixed sash were installed during the recent renovation.

6. Roof:

- a. Shape: A low-pitched roof remains over the front portion of the building closest to 13th Street. A flat roof covers the rest of the building, creating an irregular surface.
- b. Cornice, eaves: There is a modillioned metal cornice on both the street and avenue facades.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Stairways: A new steel stairway rises along the southwest wall of the building, in a renovated stairwell. It is only accessible from the rear of No. 1302.
2. Flooring: New tile floors and carpeting in the store and visitors' center; pine sub-flooring on the second and third floors with layers of old linoleum in some spots. On the third floor, the YMCA's basketball floor is still intact on the alley end. A 1911 photograph shows multi-colored linoleum covering the second-floor offices of the Railroad "Y".
3. Wall and ceiling finish: The renovated first floor has been refinished with new materials, while the framing systems are exposed on the second and third floors; evidence of early plaster and lath remain on the joists. In the 1911 photograph, the walls of the second floor offices were papered with bold, multi-colored Victorian wallpapers.
4. Openings: No early doors or windows survive.
5. Mechanical systems: The Klevan brothers installed air conditioning in their shoe store in 1938. The heating, lighting and plumbing systems are all new.

D. Site: The Jaggard Building stands at the northwest corner of 13th Street and 11th Avenue, facing southeast.



PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- A. Original architectural drawings: None located.
- B. Early views: Photograph of the Pennsylvania Railroad YMCA secretary's office in 1911 showing J. H. Aukerman at his desk. Altoona Mirror library.
- C. Bibliography:
1. Primary sources:  
  
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Moore, John. History of the Railroad YMCA. New York: Association Press, 1930.  
  
Wolf, George, ed. Blair County's First Hundred Years: 1846-1946. Altoona: The Mirror Press, 1945.
- D. Additional Sources: The March 16, 1876, editions of the Morning Tribune and Altoona Mirror were not available in local libraries or archives. If extant, they should be consulted for information regarding the dedication of the Railroad Men's Christian Association reading room.

## EAGLES BUILDING

HABS No. PA-5510



Fig. A.28 Lincoln Deposit and Trust Company Building and Eagles Building (right), 12th Avenue facades.

Location: 1106 12th Ave., Altoona, Blair County, Pa.

Present Owner: Fraternal Order of Eagles Aerie No. 286.

Present Use: The barroom behind the lobby on the first floor is well maintained and used by lodge members. The mezzanine, second, and third floors are no longer used except for a small room on the west side of the second floor which now serves as the organization's meeting hall.

Significance: The Eagles Building stands as a powerful tribute to the thousands of working people who financed its construction. Unlike the Masons or Elks, who also built substantial buildings in the commercial center, the Eagles were a predominantly working-class organization. Their lodge, an early design by architect D. George Puderbaugh of Altoona, has an unusual brownstone facade embellished with pairs of giant, carved eagles. Though handsome, the exterior is deceptive in its stark simplicity; the interior of the lodge, by contrast, consists of three open halls with impressive plasterwork and vibrant, painted decoration. Moreover, the interior is in virtually unaltered condition.

### PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

#### A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: 1912-13. The building was dedicated during three days of concerts

and other festivities, May 29-31, 1913.

2. Architect: D. George Puderbaugh of Altoona designed the Eagles Building.

David George Puderbaugh (1885-1965) was one of the city's most versatile and prolific architects. A native of Altoona, Puderbaugh graduated from Drexel School of Architecture in Philadelphia in 1909. He opened offices in Altoona in 1912, and while he continued to practice architecture well into the 1950s, his most prestigious commissions date to the 1910s and 1920s. Puderbaugh served as Blair County Supervising Engineer for the Works Project Administration from 1935-38, and as a member of Altoona's housing authority in the late 1950s. He was also active in local politics, becoming chairman of the Blair County Democratic Committee in 1940, and losing closely contested races for mayor in 1943 and 1951.

Puderbaugh's work had a tremendous impact on the architectural development of Altoona and its environs.

A list of his projects mentions over 300 residences, schools, churches, stores, and fraternal lodges. In addition to the Eagles Building, his outstanding productions include the Italian Renaissance-style Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church (1912), which may have brought him back to Altoona; the parallelogram-shaped Brotherhood of Railway Trainmen's Hall (1914) on 8th

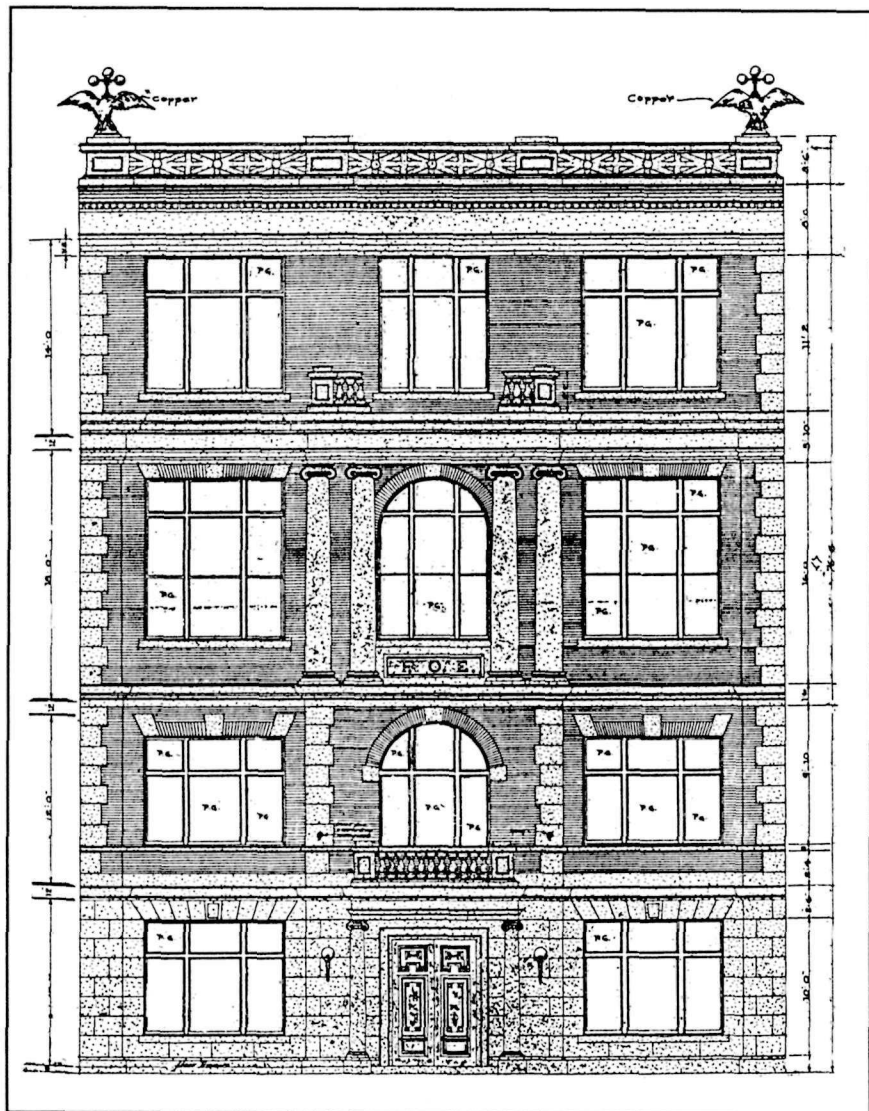


Fig. A.29 Eagles Building. Drawing of 12th Avenue facade, March 9, 1912.

Avenue, which is still standing, but does not have its original cornice; and the Knights of Columbus Lodge on 11th Avenue (1925-26). By contrast, he also designed the "palatial" homes of some of Altoona's wealthiest capitalists, usually in a restrained, Colonial-Revival style. Those of note include the Boyer, Wolf, and Rothert residences in Sylvan Hills, just south of Altoona on the Logan Valley Railway.<sup>15</sup>

3. Original and subsequent owners: The Eagles have owned this site since 1905.
4. Builder, contractor, suppliers: P. W. Finn was the contractor.
5. Original plans and construction: The lodge was designed to house the Eagles' club activities on all four floors. The first floor, which was equipped with a 50' bar, served as an informal social hall and buffet room; the mezzanine featured orchestra and billiard balconies on opposite ends of the building; the second floor consisted of the grand ballroom; and the third was devoted to lodge activities. These four divisions are marked on the exterior by molded brownstone stringcourses and varied window treatments. The building was designed with a flat roof, which supported a rooftop garden and a bandstand. A 1913 photograph of the facade also shows a marquee over the front entrance, which has since been removed. The cost of construction was estimated at \$100,000.

Judging by the original set of architectural drawings, some major modifications were made before the building was erected. Instead of the present brownstone-faced facade, the plans called for a brick wall above the first-story level. On these three upper floors of the facade, only the decorative elements--quoins, sills, columns, stringcourses, and keystones--were intended to be of brownstone. The original drawings also show a pair of copper lamps in the shape of eagles mounted on the rooftop balustrade; these were apparently never installed. Instead, a pair of giant, carved eagles was placed on the balustrade above the main entranceway, and a second pair was placed on the fourth-floor balustrade, flanking the central bay.

6. Alterations and additions: In 1940-41, the Eagles renovated their clubhouse, installing four new bowling alleys in their lodge room, and a mahogany bar on the second floor. The ballroom also received new furniture and curtains, improved lighting equipment (spotlights, etc.), and a fresh paint scheme of pale blue with bright blue trim. The windows on the front facade were replaced with glass block in the 1940s.

In the 1970s, a dropped ceiling was installed between the first and mezzanine floors, just below the balconies. Heat and electricity to the rest of the building were cut off at that time, as it was too expensive to maintain the vacant floors.

B. Historical Context:

Altoona Aerie No. 286, Fraternal Order of Eagles, was founded November 30, 1902, with 250 charter members. The lodge met on the fourth floor of the Mateer Building until 1905. On November 4, 1904, it purchased an earlier building on the current site for \$16,500. The Eagles

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<sup>15</sup>*Altoona Mirror*: "Puderbaugh Given WPA Directorship," (August 24, 1935); "Puderbaugh is New Chairman of Democrats," (May 1940); "D. G. Puderbaugh Candidate for Mayor," [Paid political advertisement] (October 27, 1943); "Architect, 79, Long Active in Area, Expires," (February 27, 1965). "A List of Drawings of the late D. George Puderbaugh, Architect," typescript, compiled by James S. Kasun, n. d.

spent an additional \$10,000 for improvements to this structure, but it was soon outgrown.<sup>16</sup>

The dedication of the new building made headlines for three consecutive days. Occurring May 29-31, 1913, the dedication was attended by a large national delegation of Eagles. On the first day, a parade of 2,000 marched down 11th and 12th avenues to the new lodge. The parade was followed by concerts and an opening banquet for Eagles and their spouses. The second day's events included the formal dedication of the building, with speeches on "the workingmen of Altoona," fraternalism, and other subjects. This ceremony was followed by a vaudeville performance and dancing in the rooftop garden. On the final day, D. George Puderbaugh

gave a talk on the

architecture of the building. The Altoona Gazette commented that the building would "stand as a monument to his exceptional ability." Overall, the "splendor" of the dedication ceremonies was described as "unprecedented" in the city of Altoona; a schedule of upcoming events was printed in the newspaper each day.<sup>17</sup>

The Eagles made headlines again in the 1930s when their clubhouse was raided by federal officials--on three separate occasions--for the illegal manufacture and possession of alcoholic

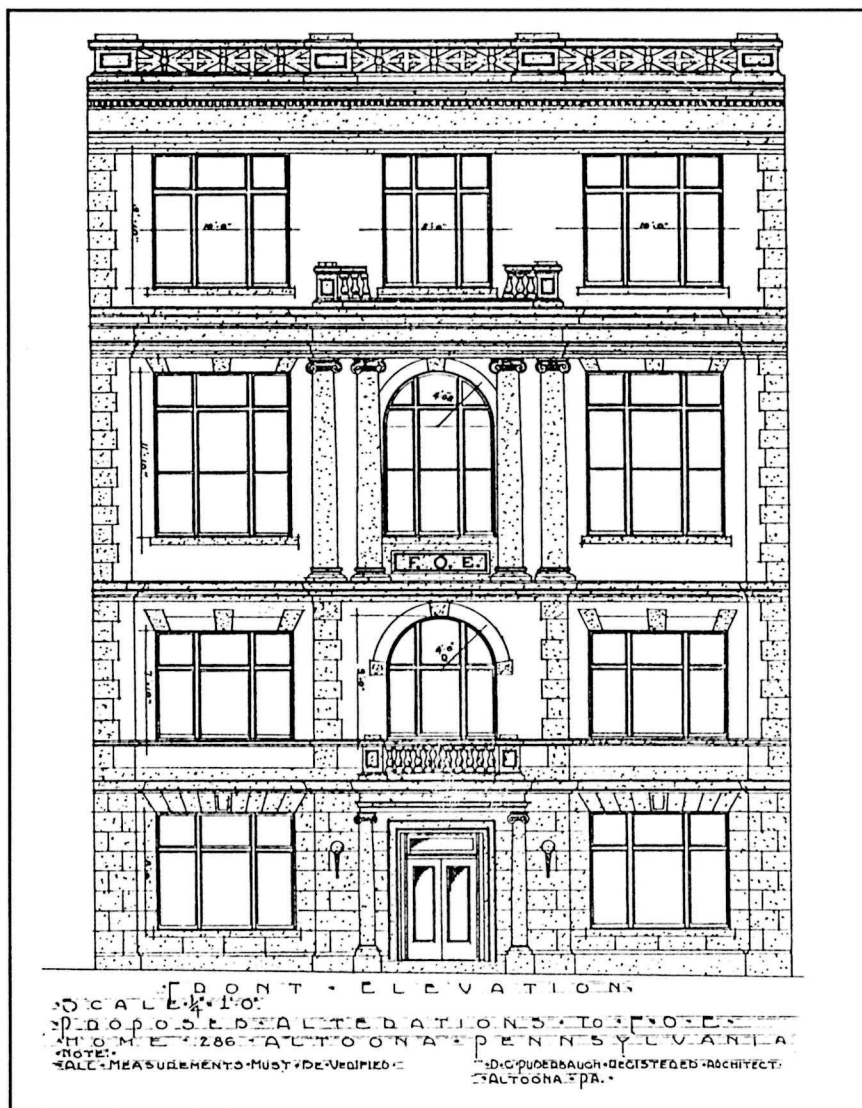


Fig. A.30 Eagles Building. Drawing of "Proposed Alterations to F.O.E."

<sup>16</sup>Fraternal Order of Eagles Golden Anniversary Program, 1902-1952 (Altoona: n.p., 1952).

<sup>17</sup>Altoona Gazette: "Finest Clubhouse, F.O.E. House, Awaits Dedication Ceremony," (May 28, 1913); "Eagles Flock Altoonaward for Big Show," (May 29, 1913); "Most Auspicious Opening of Eagledom's Great Celebration," (May 30, 1913). Altoona Mirror: "Eagles Building Being Dedicated," (May 29, 1913); "Eagles Celebration Concludes," (May 31, 1913).



beverages. Yet despite the availability of beer, bowling, and billiards, Aerie No. 286 maintained that it was more than just a social club. Since the 1940s, the lodge has been actively involved in the Eagles' national campaigns for worker's compensation and old-age pensions, thus integrating fraternal activity with social responsibility.<sup>18</sup>

According to a lodge history, early membership was drawn from the "best" of Altoona's professional, business, and railroad employees. The Eagles provided economic security to their members with health insurance and widow's pensions at a time when neither the government nor employers provided such benefits. Aerie No. 286 boasted nearly 2,200 members in 1915, and just over 3,000 with the return of servicemen in the late 1940s. By the 1980s, however, the lodge's numbers had dwindled to about 200 members, only a handful are currently active in the club.<sup>19</sup>

## PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

### A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: The stark, Neoclassical facade seems incongruous with the building's opulent interior which displays a lavish use of ornamental plasterwork and bright, painted decoration on the walls and ceiling.
2. Condition of fabric: Good-fair. Despite substantial water damage on all four floors, the original plan and decorative plasterwork remain intact.

### B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: The four-story, attached, rectangular building measures 50' x 119' x 76'-6" to the top of the parapet wall on the roof. There are three bays across the front.
2. Foundations: Not visible.
3. Walls: The facade is faced in smooth brownstone. The central bay, which projects slightly from the first-to-third stories, has a variety of surface ornamentation. At the first floor, a pair of engaged, Ionic columns flank the main entrance. There are balustrades supporting pairs of carved eagles at the second and fourth stories. On the third floor, the central bay has a pair of Ionic columns on either side of the window; a carved name panel reading "F.O.E." is located just below this window. The first and third bays are identical; a pier at each end of the facade rises a full three stories. An elaborate, molded stringcourse separates the third and fourth stories. The rear facade is a plain, red-brick wall laid in common bond.
4. Structural systems, framing: The building has a reinforced-concrete and steel frame and a steel-framed roof.
5. Openings:

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<sup>18</sup>Alvin J. Schmidt, Fraternal Organizations (Westport, Connecticut: The Greenwood Press, 1980), 94-6. FOE Aerie No. 286, Golden Anniversary Program.

<sup>19</sup>Chardos G. Nearhoof, Trustee, FOE No. 286, interview by Nancy Spiegel, Altoona, Pa., July 10, 1989.

- a. Doorways and doors: The main entranceway is located in the central bay of the building. The original double doors, which no longer survive, had three rectangular panels with swags and other Neoclassical ornamentation on the upper panels. They have been replaced by a pair of V-joint slab doors with small crosses set in rectangular panels of glass. The new doors were salvaged when the adjacent Grace Lutheran Church (built 1898) was demolished in the 1970s to make way for a podiatrist's office and parking lot.
    - b. Windows: The window openings were originally fitted with tripartite sash. These consisted of one-over-one-light, double-hung sash topped by three fixed, single-light transoms. In the central bay, the second- and third-floor windows are round-arched. The rest of the windows, on both the front and rear facades, have flat brick arches. Most of the windows are now filled with glass block.
  6. Roof:
    - a. Shape: The flat roof, designed to support a rooftop garden, was originally floored in red block tile. It has recently been covered with layers of built-up roofing. The parapet wall rises 4'-6" from the top of the roof to the top of the tile block coping.
    - b. Cornice: The denticulated cornice is of brownstone.
- C. Description of Interior:
  1. Floor plans:
    - a. Basement: In addition to containing two boilers and coal bins, the basement was also used for food storage and preparation. A kitchen with two gas stoves, two walk-in coolers, and ample pantry areas is located on the 12th Avenue end. Other notable basement features include a restroom with the original urinals set on marble pedestals, and refrigeration units that date to 1913. Originally, the basement also had a wine cellar, rathskeller, and several bowling alleys, but these no longer remain. The basement has experienced severe water damage; some parts are under as much as a foot of water.
    - b. First: The main entrance leads to an inner vestibule and the elevator lobby. The lodge secretary's office and two private dining rooms open off the lobby. Behind these rooms is the social hall, which measures 47' x 64'. The floor-to-ceiling height is 24' in the two-story social hall and 12' in the lobby and dining rooms.
    - c. Second (Mezzanine): The mezzanine had orchestra and billiard balconies on either end of the building. A private dining room measuring 15'-6" x 10'-2" and a dining hall measuring 15' x 33'-10" were located opposite the stairway on the 12th Avenue end.
    - d. Third: The ballroom, which measures 47' x 88', was described as "the most elaborately fitted and best appointed of any in this section of Pennsylvania." The hyperbolic, but nonetheless telling description continued: "Few surpass [the Eagles' ballroom] in any of the large larger club houses or hotels of the metropolitan cities of this country." (Altoona Gazette, [May 28, 1913]) The

front of the orchestra balcony was embellished with an 18' mosaic, since removed. To the front of the building were the ladies' parlor, retiring, and refreshment rooms. The floor-to-ceiling height is 18'.

- e. Fourth: The lodge room, which measures 47' x 90', had elevated platforms along the sides. "Splendidly appointed" ante-rooms were located at the 12th Avenue end, along with committee and lounging rooms. The floor-to-ceiling height is 14'.
2. Stairway: The stairway is located in the elevator lobby, to the right of the main entrance. It has carved newel posts and turned balusters on all floors.
3. Flooring: The basement has 4" thick concrete floors. With the exception of the elevator lobby, which has a multi-colored tile floor, the remainder of the building is floored in yellow pine. The Lodge Room originally had dark green Wilton carpets.
4. Wall and ceiling finish:
  - a. Basement: All interior walls are of brick; they were originally plastered with cement mortar. The ceiling has exposed joists.
  - b. First: The elevator lobby is finished with Italian marble and a plaster cornice with egg-and-dart molding. Behind the entrance, the buffet room has a pressed-metal ceiling with decorative beams. Six pilasters with Ionic capitals decorate each of the side walls.
  - c. Ballroom: Originally, the decorative Ionic pilasters in the ballroom were painted gold, cream and pink. The ceiling, "which impresses one with its height and grandeur" was finished with elaborate plaster decoration, "the design of Louis XV"; these features remain intact, although the color scheme has changed several times.
  - d. Lodge Room: Originally, the walls had "deep pink frescoes"; the plaster ceiling was painted buff.
5. Openings: Most of the interior doors have five rectangular panels. All of the doorways have Colonial Revival-style surrounds except for the basement doorways, which have simple, molded surrounds.
6. Original furnishings: The Eagles Building had a variety of "artistic and luxurious" furnishings. The Lodge Room was furnished with mahogany and leather benches. Oak chairs with green leather trim were located in the Ballroom, and the room's windows were draped in "old rose and cream curtains." Much of the original furniture has been removed to the basement, where it is in a very bad state of repair. In addition, the basement pantries are still stocked with the original blue and white transfer-printed tablewares and serving pieces; warming tables are still in place in the second- and third-floor anterooms.
7. Mechanical systems:
  - a. Heating: Steam heat.

- b. Lighting: The Eagles Building was equipped with electric lighting. In the Ballroom, indirect lighting was provided by eighteen "beautiful and costly white art domes, each carrying high power tungsten incandescent." The lights in the Lodge Room were "toned with opalescent shades," and equipped with a dimmer. The fusebox on the first floor appears to be original.
  - c. Food service: The basement was equipped with two gas stoves, two walk-in coolers, and a dumb-waiter system for transporting food and tablewares to the banquet and ballrooms above. All of these features are still extant.
- D. Site: The building faces southeast on 12th Avenue.

### PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- A. Original architectural drawings: A set of nine original ink-on-linen drawings are in the possession of James S. Kasun, registered architect, 302 Coleridge Ave., Altoona, Pennsylvania. These include front and rear elevations, a complete set of floor plans, a longitudinal section, and a perspective section through the northeast corner of the roof. All drawings are signed by Puderbaugh and dated March 9, 1912.
- B. Early view: The Altoona Mirror library has a photograph of the building, ca. 1913, in its collection of historic cuts. The original marquee over the entrance and the original tripartite sash appear in this view.
- C. Interview: Chardos G. Nearhoof, Trustee, FOE No. 286, interview by Nancy Spiegel, Altoona Pa., July 10, 1989.
- D. Bibliography:

- 1. Primary sources:

- Altoona Mirror:

- "Eagles Building Being Dedicated," (May 29, 1913).

- "Eagles Celebration Concludes," (May 31, 1913).

- "Eagles Refurnish New Lodge Home," (February 13, 1941).

- "Eagles to Formally Occupy Renovated Home," (September 23, 1940).

- "Federal Officials Raid Eagles Lodge," (August 20, 1930).

- Altoona Mirror file on D. George Puderbaugh:

- "Altoona Area Affected by WMC [war manpower commission] Changes," (August 21, 1945).

- "Architect, 79, Long Active in Area, Expires," (February 27, 1965).

- "D. G. Puderbaugh Candidate for Mayor" [Paid political advertisement],

(October 27, 1943).

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"Eagles Flock Altoona-ward for Big Show," (May 29, 1913).

"Most Auspicious Opening of Eagledom's Great Celebration," (May 30, 1913).

Building Record, Blair County Tax Assessment Office, Hollidaysburg, Pa.

Puderbaugh, David George. "A List of Drawings of the late D. George Puderbaugh, Architect." Typescript, compiled by James S. Kasun, n.d., Altoona, Pennsylvania.

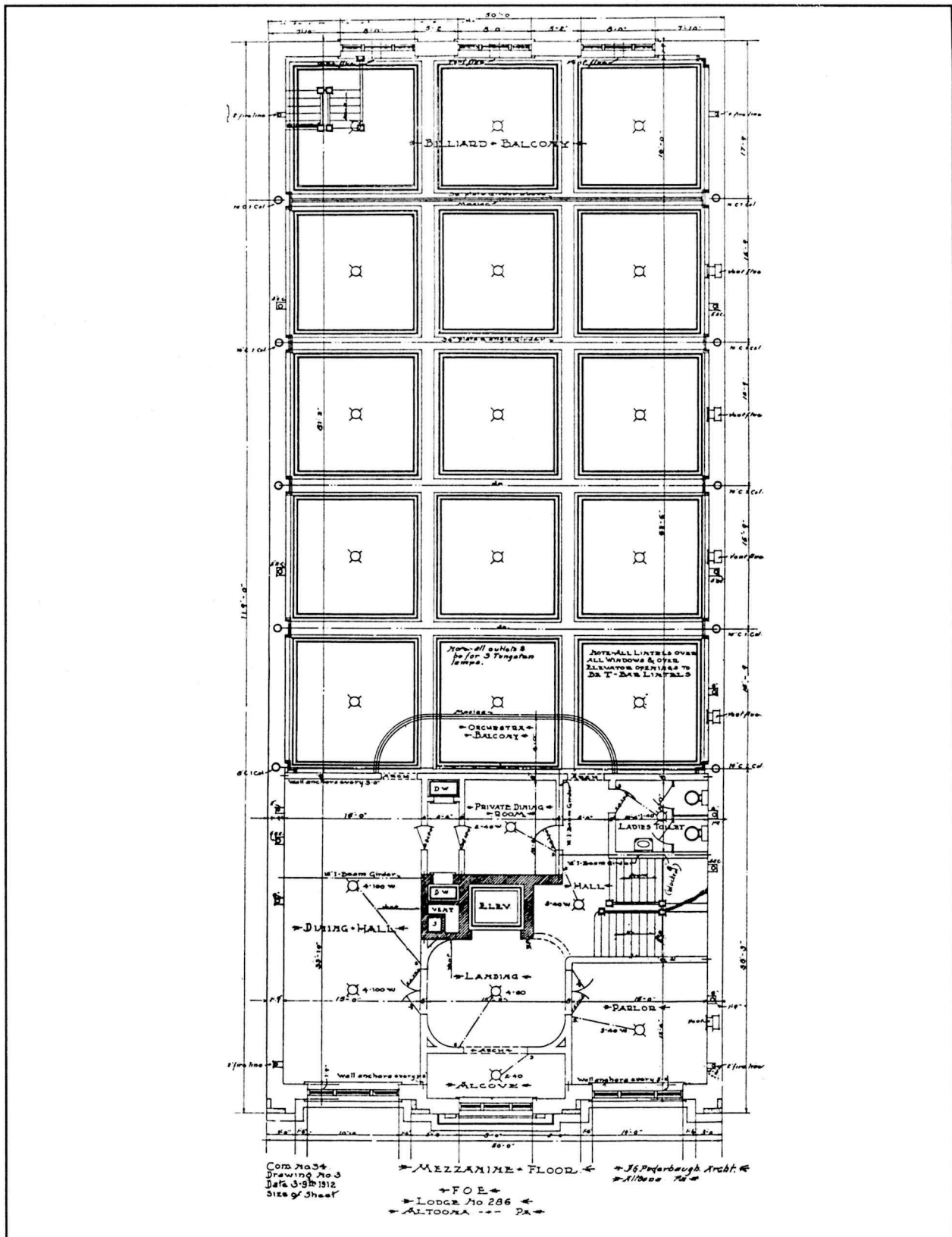
2. Secondary sources:

"Fraternal Order of Eagles" in Fraternal Organizations, by Alvin J. Schmidt. Westport, Connecticut: The Greenwood Press, 1980.

Fraternal Order of Eagles Golden Anniversary Program, 1902-1952. Altoona: n.p., 1952.

- E. Additional Sources: The records of FOE's Building Committee are probably still extant, but have not yet been located.





**Fig. A31** Eagles Building, mezzanine-floor plan, March 9, 1912.



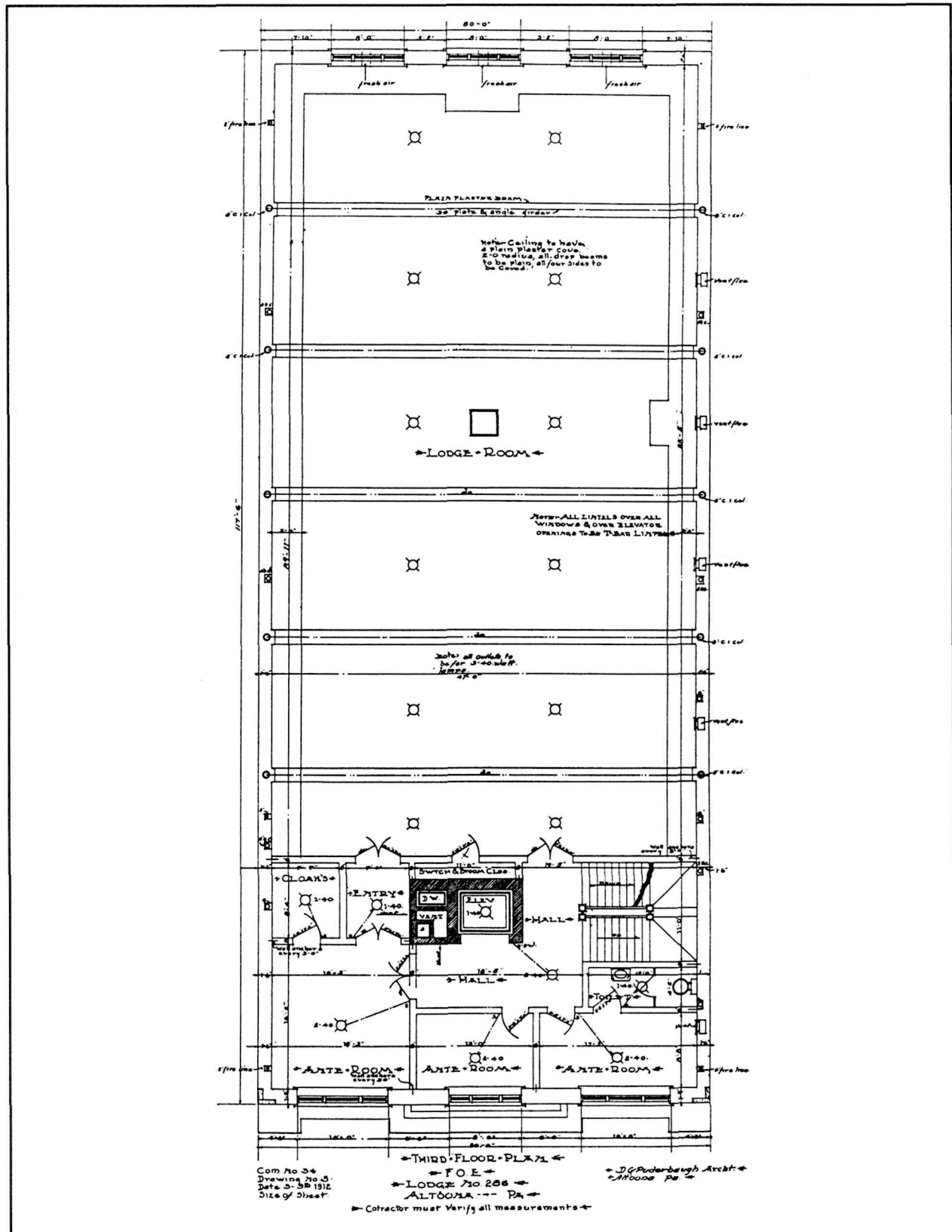
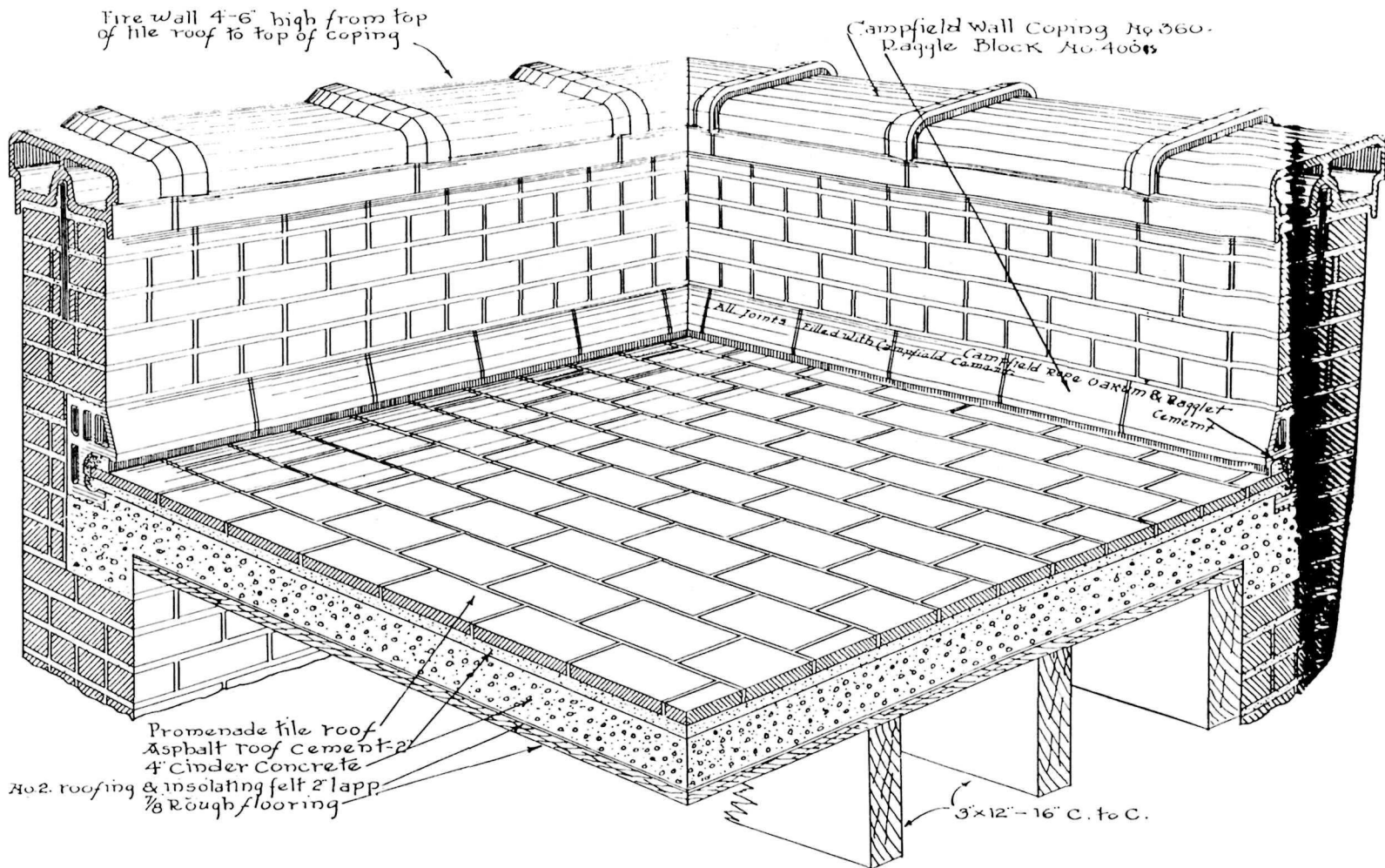


Fig. A.33 Eagles Building, third-floor plan, March 9, 1912.

Fig. A-34 Eagles Building, "Perspective section through roof at northeast corner showing construction."



≡ PERSPECTIVE SECTION THROUGH ROOF ≡  
 AT NORTH EAST CORNER  
 ≡ Showing Construction ≡

## ALTOONA TRUST COMPANY BUILDING

(Mid-State Bank Building)

HABS No. PA-5511

Location: 1128-30 12th Ave.  
(northern corner of  
12th Street and 12th  
Avenue), Altoona,  
Blair County, Pa.

Present Owner: Mid-State Bank.

Present Use: The building serves  
as the corporate  
headquarters for  
Mid-State Bank.  
The banking room  
comprises the main  
floor; the bank's  
administrative offices  
occupy the rest of  
the building.

Significance: The Altoona Trust  
Building, the work of  
Mowbray and  
Uffinger of New  
York in 1901, was  
the first Classical  
Revival-style building  
in downtown  
Altoona. The U-  
shaped, five-story  
building introduced  
new materials--gray  
brick, limestone and  
terra cotta--to the  
predominantly red-  
brick cityscape and was the first downtown office building to boast an electric elevator. Members of the building committee reported that they hoped "the creation of an imposing bank building would lend prestige and stability to the business [and] quicken its growth. . . ." One of only three local banks to survive the Depression, Altoona Trust Company has grown to become one of the largest financial institutions in central Pennsylvania.

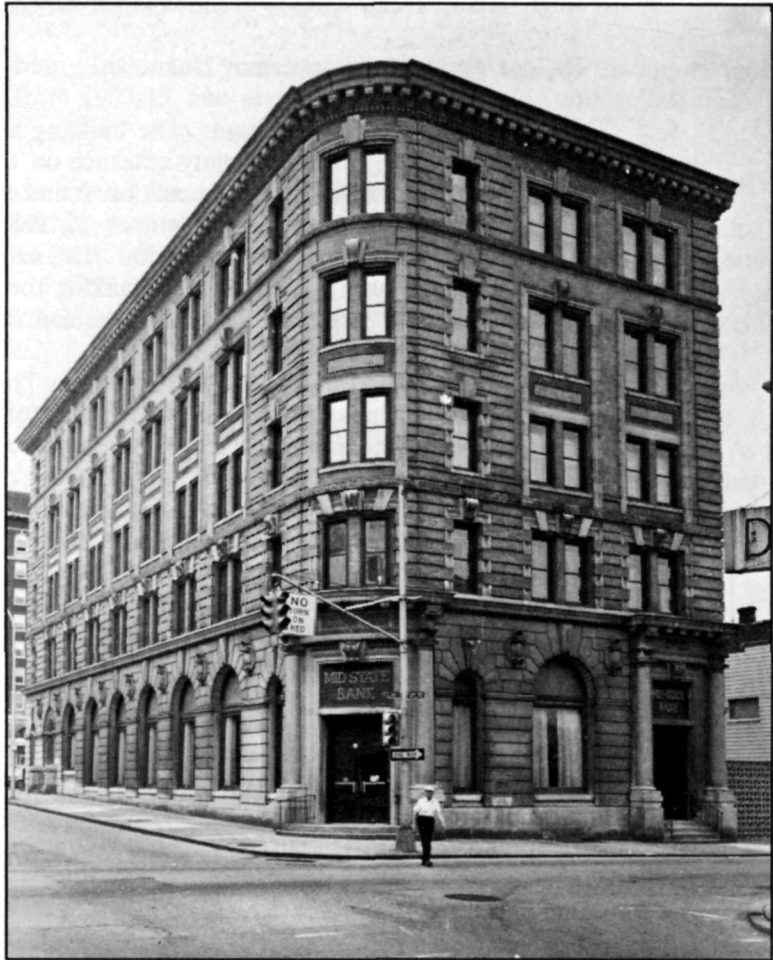


Fig. A.35 Altoona Trust Company Building, perspective at corner of 12th Avenue and 12th Street, looking north.

### PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

#### A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: 1901-02. The building opened to the public January 1, 1903.
2. Architect: The New York firm of Mowbray and Uffinger was responsible for the design.



3. Original and subsequent owners: In May 1901, the stockholders of the newly formed Altoona Trust Company authorized the purchase of a site at the northeast corner of 12th Street and 12th Avenue for their new bank. The property, which included several single-family, frame houses and a commercial shop, cost \$24,000.
4. Builder, contractor, suppliers: Unknown.
5. Original plans and construction: The building consisted of an elegant first-floor banking room, accessible from the primary entrance on the corner, and ninety-four rental offices providing "every modern accommodation found in office buildings in New York or Philadelphia." (Altoona Mirror [October 26, 1901]) A secondary entrance on 12th Street provided access to upper stories. The exterior of the building is in virtually unaltered condition; in contrast, the banking room and offices have been remodelled several times, obscuring the original plans and materials.
6. Alterations and additions: By 1929, Altoona Trust Company had outgrown its original offices. The company hired the local architectural firm of Hunter and Caldwell to design new bookkeepers' quarters, a boardroom, and restrooms in an additional 40' section on the northwest side of the first floor. Hunter and Caldwell also redesigned the tellers' area, replacing old wickets and grills with more modern, lower ones. (Portions of these wickets still remain.) Other renovations included the installation of bronze entrance doors, a safety deposit lobby, and a new vault in the rear of the building, which was entered through the machine room. New telephone and ventilation systems were also provided. ("Altoona Trust to Occupy New Quarters," Altoona Mirror, July 26, 1930])

The banking floor and offices have undergone renovations many times since the 1930s; by 1976, dropped ceilings and other new materials had been installed throughout the building. On the exterior, the pediment and rooftop balustrade and the decorative railings above both entrances were removed sometime after 1966.

B. Historical Context:

The city's fifth bank, Altoona Trust Company was founded in April 1901 by a group of prominent businessmen from Hollidaysburg, Altoona, and Pittsburgh. Theater owner I. C. Mishler, department store magnate William F. Gable, and contractor W. V. Hughes were among the bank's founding stockholders. Until the present Altoona Trust Building was completed, the bank leased temporary offices in the Blumenthal Building at 1128 11th Ave. On October 28, 1901, Altoona Trust Company opened for business in banking quarters described by the Altoona Mirror as "a room fitted up tastefully. [It] will answer nicely until the company's own building is completed."<sup>20</sup>

The Altoona Trust Building was erected in 1901-02, opening on January 1, 1903. Only two-thirds of the offices were rented during the bank's first few years of operation due to the uncertain financial climate of 1907-08. By 1909, however, the members of the building committee could report to the board of directors that the new building had fulfilled their expectations:

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<sup>20</sup>Altoona Mirror (October 26, 1901). A complete list of original shareholders can be found in Mid-State Bank 1901-1976 (Altoona: Mid-State Bank and Trust Company, 1976), 5. A first-rate, comprehensive history of Altoona Trust Company, this book should be consulted for more detailed information on the bank's financial and social history.

We did not expect at any time that our main profits would be realized from rents, but did hope the creation of an imposing bank building would lend prestige and stability to the business, quicken its growth, furnish a comfortable, durable, and economical home, and thus prove a good investment, and after seven years experience, results have proved so.<sup>21</sup>

The offices were regarded as some of the most prestigious in the city; notable tenants included Shollar and Hersh, architects, from 1903-15, and several major coal mining companies, that established headquarters there.

The Altoona Trust Company was one of three local financial institutions to survive the Depression. In 1932, its first branch was opened in the defunct Union Bank located at 8th Avenue and 12th Street; the five-story brick building is no longer extant. A third branch was established in Morrison's Cove in 1955; the "Auto Bank" drive-through windows on 12th Avenue constituted a fourth branch office established in 1958. By 1976, the bank had grown to include more than twenty branch offices.

In 1959, the Altoona Trust Company merged with the Central Trust Company to form the Altoona Central Bank and Trust Company. Central Trust's former building at 1218 11th Ave. served as the new organization's customer accounting department until the late 1970s. When the bank merged with the First Bellefont Bank and Trust Company in 1966, the name was changed to the Mid-State Bank and Trust Company. The original Altoona Trust Building now serves as the corporate headquarters of this new company, which continues to operate under its original charter of 1901.

## PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

### A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: The severe gray stone and brick building is enlivened by neo-Baroque surface ornamentation and a variety of window treatments.
2. Condition of fabric: Good. The building was sandblasted in 1966.

### B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: The five-story, U-shaped building has a rounded corner at the 12th Avenue and 12th Street intersection and extends approximately 50' (three bays on 12th Street) x 120' (nine bays on 12th Avenue.)
2. Foundations: Granite.
3. Walls: The first story is faced in Bedford ashlar limestone, while the upper stories are faced with a Pompeiian gray pressed brick in stretcher bond. Oval cartouches are mounted between each of the first-floor windows. A terra cotta band in a Greek key design extends across the street and avenue facades, visually separating the second and third floors. Simple, molded bands of limestone separate the first floor from the second, and the fourth from the fifth. The two rear facades have plain brick walls.
4. Structural systems: Steel frame with brick interior walls.

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<sup>21</sup>"Report of the Building Committee to the Board of Directors," quoted in Mid-State Bank 1901-1976, 7.

## 5. Openings:

- a. Doorways and doors: The bank entrance at the rounded corner is flanked by engaged, polished granite columns supporting a denticulated cornice with a frieze reading, "ALTOONA TRUST CO." The frieze at the secondary entrance on 12th Avenue reads "OFFICES." Modern glass and aluminum double doors have recently replaced the bronze doors of 1929.
- b. Windows: On the street and avenue facades, the first-floor windows are round-arched, with marked voussoirs and projecting keystones. The windows on the upper stories are paired and have flat arches. The second-floor windows have decorative surrounds and scrolled keystones, while the third- and fourth-floor windows are set in terra cotta panels; they also have scrolled keystones. The fifth-story windows have plain keystones. Most of the windows in the light well on the southeast facade have been bricked up. They appear to have been fitted originally with metal grills, or perhaps shutters; although these no longer survive, metal hinges remain embedded in the masonry.

6. Roof: The denticulated and modillioned terra cotta cornice is topped by a parapet wall which obscures the flat roof.

## C. Description of Interior:

## 1. Floor plans:

- a. First: The corner entrance opens onto the banking floor, which was originally



Fig. A.36 Altoona Trust Company Building, detail of first floor 12th Avenue facade.

finished with San Domingo mahogany cabinetwork and imported marble counters. The tellers' wickets had marble bases and wrought-bronze teller's screens. The teller's cages, since removed, were covered by steel, burglar-proof grills with self-closing gates. The present teller's wickets are a vestige of the 1929 renovation. The area behind the banking room was originally subdivided into suites of offices, each fitted with a wash bowl, gas and electric fixtures, and finished with red oak woodwork. Now this area contains bank offices. The first floor is also equipped with two vaults--a safety deposit vault and a book vault--visible from the street at all times. The floor-to-ceiling height is 18'. (Altoona Mirror, [October 26, 1901])

The secondary entrance on 12th Street leads to an elevator lobby with two modern elevators. Like the banking floor and offices, this area has also been recently renovated with a dropped ceiling and vinyl paneling.

- b. Second-Fifth: Typically, the upper floors consist of a U-shaped hallway lit on each end by windows. Offices open off the left of the hallway.
- 2. Stairways: A cast-metal stairway in the elevator lobby rises five stories along the southeast side of the building and opens onto offices to the left of the landing.
- 3. Flooring: In 1929, a marble floor replaced the original Italian tile flooring of the banking room. Most of the offices now have wall-to-wall carpeting, a modernization of the last ten years.
- 4. Wall and ceiling finish: A ca. 1903 photograph of the banking room shows an ornate



Fig. A37 Altoona Trust Company Building, detail of 12th Street facade.

plasterwork ceiling with decorative beams running parallel to 12th Avenue. There were also several freestanding columns with Corinthian caps supporting the ceiling in the banking room; these still stand but are completely covered with new materials. Dropped ceilings and vinyl wall coverings have been installed throughout the building.

5. Doors: Modern wood or glass and aluminum interior doors.
6. Original mechanical systems:
  - a. Heating: Originally steam; gas heating was installed in 1952.
  - b. Lighting: The building was originally equipped with both gas and electric lighting. Originally, cast-metal chandeliers, each with four opaque glass domes, were suspended from the center of the banking room.
  - c. Elevators: Two electric elevators provide access to the upper floors.
- D. Site: The Altoona Trust Building stands at the northeast corner of 12th Street and 12th Avenue. Parking lots for Mid-State Bank surround the building on its northeast and northwest sides. At one time, however, the bank was part of a dense, mixed residential and commercial streetscape. In 1932, the three-story, brick Ramey property at 1117 12th Ave. ("a very fine residence"), and the adjacent frame building (a market, restaurant, automobile sales room, and miniature golf course, at various times), were razed to make room for customer parking. In 1966, the 56-year-old Colonial Hotel on 12th Avenue was razed, the site black-topped, and opened for customer parking.<sup>22</sup>

### PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- A. Original architectural drawings: None located.
- B. Views:
  1. Photograph of the first-floor interior from the southeast, showing the original banking floor. Altoona: Bonine Photo Studio, ca. 1903. Collection of Mid-State Bank.
  2. The Altoona Mirror library has a 1966 photograph of the building in which the original pediment, rooftop balustrade, and railings appear intact.
- C. Bibliography:
  1. Primary sources:

Altoona Mirror:

"Altoona Trust Company," (October 26, 1901).

"Altoona Trust to Occupy New Quarters," (July 26, 1930).

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<sup>22</sup>"Old Landmark in City Comes Down," Altoona Mirror (June 25, 1932). Mid-State Bank 1901-1976, 16.



"Bank to Enlarge Work Space," (March 22, 1920).

"Old Landmark in City Comes Down," (June 25, 1932), discusses the history of the Ramey property at 1117 12th Ave., which was demolished by the Altoona Trust Company for a parking lot, and laments the transformation of this avenue into a commercial thoroughfare.

"Rothert Building, Mishler Theatre and Elks Home Burned This Morning," (October 19, 1906), includes a description of the relatively minor damage to the Altoona Trust Building.

2. Secondary sources:

Mid-State Bank 1901-1976. Altoona: Mid-State Bank and Trust Company, 1976.

Wolf, George A., ed. Blair County's First Hundred Years:1846-1946. Altoona: The Mirror Press, 1945.

- E. Additional Sources: Minutes from the meetings of the Board of Directors, which do survive in the bank's archives, could provide additional insights into the selection of the site, the architectural firm, and the building's design, etc. The New York firm Mowbray and Uffinger (in business in the late 1920s) merits further attention, as well.

## MISHLER THEATRE

HABS No. PA-5512



Fig. A.38 Mishler Theatre, perspective 12th Avenue facade.

Location: 1208 12th Ave., Altoona, Blair County, Pa.

Present Owner: Blair County Arts Foundation (BCAF), a non-profit community corporation organized in 1960.

Present Use: The Mishler Theatre now serves as a civic auditorium as well as a center for the performing arts.

Significance: The Mishler Theatre is the last remaining downtown theater. Designed as a playhouse by Albert Westover of Philadelphia in 1905-06, and rebuilt after a fire that same year, the theater is a fine example of the Beaux Arts style that dominated public architecture in the early years of the twentieth century. Its brick and Indiana limestone facade is complemented by a lavish interior executed in marble and ornamental plaster in a flamboyant Baroque style. In 1967-69, the theater was the focus of the city's first successful preservation effort. Rescued from demolition in 1965, the building is now renovated and used as a civic auditorium. It stands as a tribute to the foresight and perseverance of the arts community.

### PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

#### A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: 1905-06; rebuilt 1906. The opening performance took place February

15, 1906. Eight months later, the theater was gutted by fire originating in the adjacent Rothert's furniture store. On January 21, 1907, the theater re-opened with "pomp and ceremony . . . eclipsing the first opening." ("The Mishler Re-Opened," Altoona Mirror [January 22, 1907], 3)

2. Architect: The building was designed by Albert E. Westover of Philadelphia. Westover, who had offices in the Keith Theatre Building in Philadelphia, was well known as a designer of playhouses and motion picture theaters for the Keith Theatre circuit. Between 1901 and 1919, he planned more than seventy theatres in the northeastern United States and Canada. Westover and Mishler collaborated for a second time when they planned Altoona's Mishler Theatre; in 1904 Westover designed the State Street Theatre in Trenton, N. J., which Mishler owned until 1907, the year he decided to devote his full attention to his Altoona theater. (Tatman, Sandra and Roger W. Moss, 1985. "Noted Theatre Owner Passes," Altoona Mirror [May 9, 1944])
3. Original and subsequent owners: In 1923 Isaac Mishler attempted to sell the theater to John S. Ginter, a Tyrone banker, for \$200,000; apparently the sale fell through. On January 9, 1931, Anast Notopolous purchased the theater and added it to his local chain of motion picture theaters. The Mishler remained in the Notopolous family until 1965, when it was acquired by the Blair County Arts Foundation and Altoona Community Theatre, which raised the requisite \$47,500. (Altoona Mirror, [July 18, 1923]; "Mishler Theatre History," typescript, n. d., Altoona Mirror library)
4. Contractor: P. W. Finn and Company, the premier Altoona firm, was the general contractor. At the time of the theater's construction, Finn's crews were also at work on the adjacent Rothert's building, Central Trust Company building, and First Methodist Episcopal Church--all large, prestigious buildings in the commercial district. Finn's firm was also responsible for rebuilding the theater after the 1906 fire.
5. Original plans and construction: The building was designed to accommodate live entertainment in a grand manner. The main floor was equipped with a ladies' parlor and cloak rooms in the rear, and there were two balconies. The seating capacity was 1,900. The facade has three limestone stringcourses which define the three parts of the theatre--orchestra, first balcony, and gallery. Contemporary accounts of the construction costs ranged from \$110,000 to \$118,000.
6. Alterations and additions:

Eight months after the theater opened in 1906, it was gutted by a fire originating in the elevator shaft of the adjacent Rothert's furniture building. The exterior walls of the theater were still standing and in good condition. The interior was in ruins, however; it dates to the rebuilding of late 1906.

After the fire, the auditorium ceiling was re-designed by Albert Westover, in collaboration with Max Voigt of Tognarelli and Voigt, an interior design firm. The main ceiling was raised 6' to accommodate a dome 40' in circumference and 30' in diameter, which remains intact. A painting representing "The Glorification of Art" was placed within the dome. The dome was then surrounded by sixteen life-sized, classical figures, highlighted with gilt decoration. The seats were enlarged slightly, from 20" to 22" wide, and the aisles were also widened, from 2'-10" to 3' wide.

In 1930, the box office was moved from the side to the center of the entrance lobby,

and new seats and velvet curtains were installed. From time to time, additional modifications were made to the theater, which offered only motion pictures from 1923 to 1962.

The Mishler Theatre was also the subject of two restoration projects by the business and arts community. In celebration of its fiftieth anniversary in 1956, the theater was refurbished through the contributions of local merchants. In 1967-69, the BCAF undertook a thorough restoration of the theater, which included the removal of the building's heavy cornice and balustrade. On the interior, the orchestra pit was made level with the rest of the floor, and the seats were reupholstered in a bright red textile. The fly was entirely refurbished in 1967; all of the overhead lights, drop curtains, and equipment for raising and lowering sets are new.

B. Historical Context:

Born in Lancaster, Pa., in 1863, I. C. Mishler moved to Altoona in 1881, becoming an employee of the Pennsylvania Railroad Company. Beginning in 1894, with the purchase of the Cambria Theatre in Johnstown, Mishler built a veritable entertainment empire. At one time, he controlled the opera houses in both Johnstown and Altoona, and held a controlling interest in playhouses as far-flung as the Lyric Theatre in Allentown; Fulton Theatre in Lancaster; Lyceum, in Patterson, N. J.; and his most ambitious venture before the Mishler, the State Street Theatre in Trenton.<sup>23</sup>

In addition to his involvement in the entertainment industry, Mishler was a member of the Masons, Elks, Odd Fellows, and Knights of Pythias; a director of the Central Trust Company, and a founding stockholder of the Altoona Trust Company. A major stockholder in the Blair Hotel Company, Mishler resided at the Penn Alto Hotel for several years before his death in 1944.

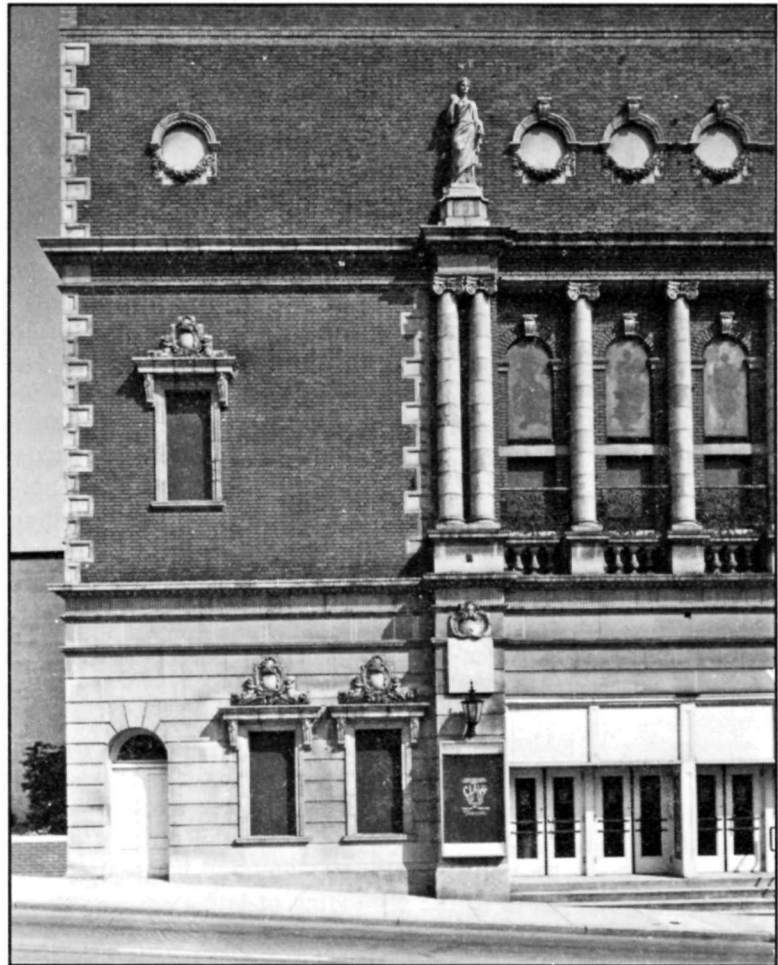


Fig. A.39 Mishler Theatre, detail of 12th Avenue facade.

<sup>23</sup>"I. C. Mishler, Noted Theatre Owner Passes," *Altoona Mirror* (May 9, 1944).

From 1906 to 1923, the Mishler Theatre featured live performances. The playhouse was celebrated for attracting such nationally acclaimed performers as John Philip Sousa, Lillian Russell, Al Jolsen, and Helen Hayes. From the outset, Isaac Mishler insisted that his theater offer only "high-class" entertainment; the 11th Avenue Opera House, by contrast, hosted burlesque reviews and less-expensive productions.

From 1923 until 1962 the Mishler was used primarily as a movie theater with a yearly dance recital and one or two road shows annually. Then, threatened with demolition in 1965, the theater was purchased by the Blair County Arts Foundation, restored, and reopened for live performances.

The building is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

## PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

### A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: The design incorporates such classical and Baroque elements as statuary, oval cartouches, and Ionic columns, to enliven the blank facade of the theater.
2. Condition of fabric: Good.

### B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: The three-story, L-shaped building has a six-bay facade, and measures approximately 83' x 120'.
2. Foundations: Granite.
3. Walls: The first story of the facade is faced with rusticated, Indiana limestone. The upper stories consist of a red-brick wall laid in Flemish bond, with limestone quoins. At the second floor there are four round-arched windows separated by limestone columns with Ionic capitals. The columns are mounted on a stone balustrade. At the third story, four bull's-eye windows are flanked by two life-size, stone statues representing Melpomene, the Muse of tragedy, and Terpsichore, the Muse of dance. The side and rear facades are of buff brick laid in stretcher bond.
4. Structural systems, framing: Brick bearing walls with iron joists and wood posts. The roof is framed with a flat steel-truss system and wood rafters.
5. Openings:
  - a. Doorways and doors: The main entrance has four sets of glass and aluminum doors. The two secondary entrances, on either side of the first-floor windows, have round-arches, leaded-glass transom windows and marked voussoirs. On the northeast facade, the alley entrance has an elaborate, limestone surround and several brownstone approach steps. The wood door has five rectangular panels. There is a round-arched stage door on the rear facade.
  - b. Windows: On the facade, the first-floor windows have bracketed lintels



and elaborate pediments. There are four round-arched windows between the columns at the second-floor level, and one pedimented window on either end of the facade. The round-arched windows are filled with brightly colored paper designs that resemble stained glass. There are four bull's-eye windows between the statues on the third floor, and one bull's-eye window in the first and sixth bays. The windows on the side and rear facades have been bricked in.

6. Roof:

- a. Shape: The area over the stage has a hipped roof with a stepped parapet. The rest of the roof is flat.
- b. Cornice: The building was originally crowned with a limestone balustrade and a heavy, ornamental cornice with paired brackets, closely spaced modillions, and a Neoclassical frieze. It was replaced with brick and simple molded bands of limestone in the 1960s.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans:

- a. Basement: The basement has nine dressing rooms on either side of a longitudinal corridor. Originally, the basement had twelve dressing rooms and was also furnished with a gentlemen's smoking room, "fitted up in Flemish style."
  - b. First: The entrance lobby, which is 30' wide, was originally decorated with "marble in the French style, and mosaic decoration." The main ticket office was to the right of the lobby, with an emergency ticket-sales office, opposite and to the left of the lobby. The emergency ticket office has since been removed. The main floor, which now seats 499, is reached through four sets of double doors. The proscenium is 38' wide and 31' high. The stage extends to the side walls and measures 43' deep and 70' high.
  - c. Balcony: The balcony, which currently seats 402, has an ornate plasterwork front with gilt ornament.
  - d. Gallery: The gallery, which has not been restored, has an ornate front covered with swags and other classical motifs. The Notopolous's projection booth still remains in the rear of this balcony.
2. Stairways: The dress circles and balconies were reached by twin staircases rising from the foyer on both sides. The stairways have handsome wood newel posts, turned balusters, and wood treads. An enclosed fire escape, rising to the first balcony, was constructed along the western wall of the theater in the late 1960s.
3. Flooring: The entrance lobby originally had a multi-colored tile floor reading "MISHLER" in red tile; it was replaced with a plain tile floor in the 1960s. The carpets were all "electric red."
4. Wall and ceiling finish: The lobby ceiling, which is 15' high, was "elaborately

decorated"; the walls now feature flocked, red wallpaper. The walls of the theater were "apple green." The walls and ceiling are embellished with classical figures and other gilt designs representing themes related to music, art, and dance. There is an allegorical painting in the upper proscenium depicting the spirits of tragedy and comedy. Executed by M. Taylor Rue in 1907, the painting was restored during the 1960s.

5. Openings:

- a. Doorways and doors: The typical interior doors have three rectangular panels and a transom with fixed sash.

6. Mechanical systems:

- a. Heating/cooling: The building was heated and cooled with forced air driven through various coils. Air was then circulated through the theater with "huge suction fans" that remained in the building until the 1960s.
- b. Lighting: The theater was originally equipped with 2,900 electric lamps, concealed to prevent glare in viewers' eyes.
- c. Fire-prevention equipment: A Grinnell glass disc automatic sprinkler system was installed in the theater in 1906 when it first opened. In addition, the theater was equipped with fourteen hose plugs and numerous fire extinguishers. These precautions led one observer to comment that, "It seems entirely impossible to have a fire in the building." (Altoona Mirror [February 15, 1906])

- D. Site: The Mishler Theatre faces southeast on 12th Avenue. Originally, the theater had a 10' open court on either side; at that time it was the most spacious frontage on 12th Avenue. When built in 1905-06, 12th Avenue was a prestigious residential neighborhood lined with brick-veneered dwellings, many in the Queen Anne style. This scale was dramatically altered with the construction of the theater, and the seven-story Rother's furniture building, both in 1906.

### PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- A. Original architectural drawings: Eight blueprints of architectural drawings by Albert Westover are located in the building. These include plans of the basement, first, balcony, and gallery floors; transverse sections through the stage and auditorium; a longitudinal section and a front elevation.
- B. Early views:
  - 1. Postcard captioned "The playhouse perfect and beautiful," and a postcard view of 12th Avenue looking east, showing the theater and Rother's furniture building. Both, ca. 1910, show the theater before the original balustrade and ornamental cornice were removed. Collection of the Main Street Manager, Altoona, Pa. 16601.
  - 2. Other early views, along with photographs of the 1960s restoration, can be found in the collection of the Blair County Arts Foundation, Altoona Pa.
- C. Interview: Bill Maloy, stage manager since the BCAAF acquisition, and current theater manager, interview by Nancy Spiegel, Altoona, Pa., (July 21, 1989).

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"New Seating in Mishler Theatre," (May 31, 1930).

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## 2. Secondary sources:

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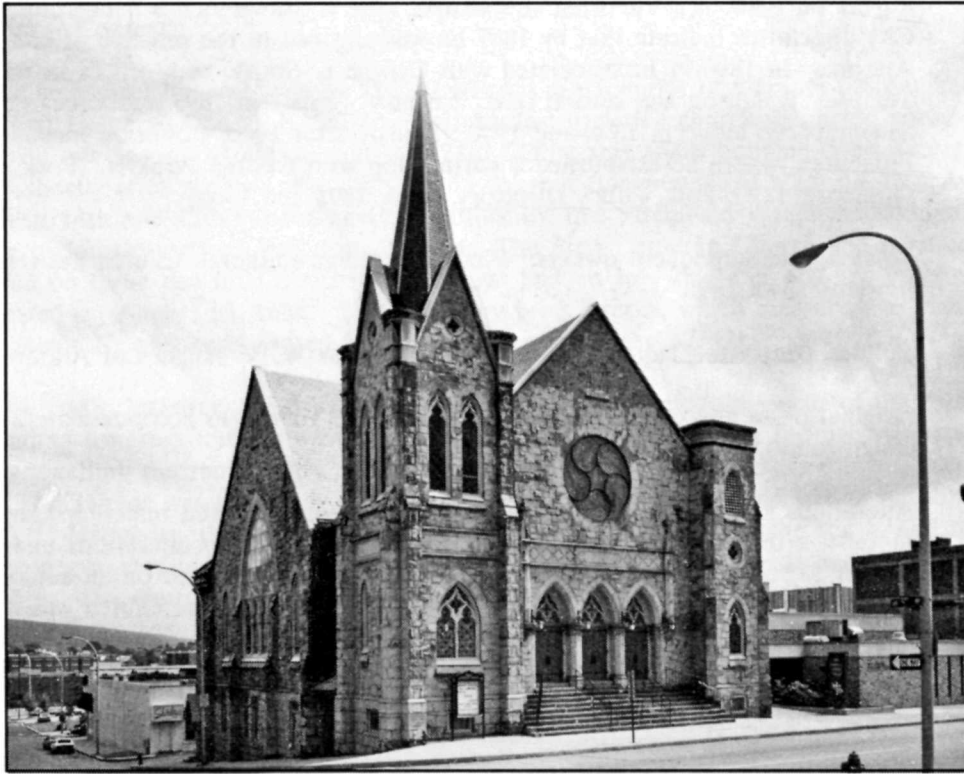
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**FIRST EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH**  
HABS No. PA-5513



**Fig. A.40** First Evangelical Lutheran Church, 1401-05 12th Ave.

Location: 1401-05 12th Ave. (southwest corner 14th Street and 12th Avenue), Altoona, Blair County, Pa.

Present Owner: First Evangelical Lutheran Church.

Present Use: Church.

Significance: The First Evangelical Lutheran Church (1896-97) was the last Gothic Revival-style church to be built in downtown Altoona. The fifth home of a congregation organized in 1834, the church was planned by Charles M. Robinson at a time when other downtown congregations were replacing their dated Gothic structures with more eclectic design schemes derived from a full spectrum of architectural traditions. In addition to displaying finely crafted clustered columns and other intricate woodwork, the church's well-preserved interior features some of Altoona's finest bevelled- and stained-glass windows, a myriad of multicolor floral, geometric and religious designs.

**PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION**

**A. Physical History:**

1. Date of erection: 1896-97. Ground was broken April 3, 1896; the cornerstone laying

ceremony took place July 18, 1896. The church was dedicated May 21, 1897.

2. Architect: Charles M. Robinson of Altoona. Although Robinson had a tremendous impact on Altoona's Victorian streetscape, little is known of his background or training. City directories indicate that by 1887 he was engaged in the practice of architecture in Altoona. In 1890-91 he associated with George L. Smith, with offices in the Masonic Temple. Robinson had several other partners--Snyder in 1893 and Crockett in 1896--and practiced alone in 1898 and 1900. Shortly after 1900, Robinson moved to Pittsburgh, where he established a partnership with George Winkler. (Polk, City Directory, 1890; Polk, Polk's Directory, 1896, 1898 and 1900)
3. Original and subsequent owners: First Evangelical Lutheran Church has owned the property since 1896.
4. Builder, contractor, suppliers: The contractor was W. V. Hughes of Altoona.
5. Original plans and construction: The church was rebuilt to accommodate a growing congregation that numbered over 1,000 members.
6. Alterations and additions: The church has been repaired and remodeled several times. In 1904, a three manual pipe organ was installed, and other alterations undertaken, at a cost of \$7,500. During the same year, a parsonage was erected on an adjacent lot for \$6,500. This building is no longer extant. The chancel of the church was dismantled, removed, and rebuilt in 1949-50; a new Aeolian-Skinner organ was then purchased to



Fig. A.41 First Evangelical Lutheran Church, 1401-05 12th Ave., detail of arch over entrance on northwest facade.



replace the historic Pilcher organ. At the same time, all of the stained-glass windows were cleaned and refurbished. An educational wing next door, on 12th Avenue, was built in 1971.

B. Historical Context:

Active in central Pennsylvania by 1805, Lutheran missionaries of German descent had organized the First Lutheran Church by 1834. Their earliest recorded church was a log house near what is now the intersection of 4th Avenue and 23rd Street; this 1830s building is no longer extant. In 1853--shortly after Altoona was plotted--the congregation purchased a lot on 11th Avenue between 14th and 15th streets, next to another lot that Archibald Wright had donated to the congregation through his son, John Wright. The First Lutheran Church and parsonage were erected on these two lots: the cornerstone was laid on July 23, 1853, and the building was dedicated on August 13, 1854. This two-story brick church, which measured 46' x 75', was in the Gothic Revival style, seated 750, and cost an estimated \$7,000.

By the 1890s, however, the brick church proved insufficient for the needs of the rapidly expanding congregation. A wave of religious enthusiasm had swept through Altoona in the late 1870s, swelling the ranks of the Lutheran congregation. Its temperance and missionary societies were thriving, as was the newly established Sunday School, which boasted an enrollment of 1,000.<sup>24</sup> Moreover, the church's proximity to the railroad tracks to the south, and the streetcars to the north, resulted in a noisy, distracting environment that was less than ideal for religious worship. The church decided to relocate and rebuild in what was then a tranquil, upper-class residential neighborhood, one block north of its current location on the main commercial street. Two adjacent lots were purchased on the southwest corner of 12th Avenue and 14th Street, and funds for the construction of the new building were raised through private subscription. Ground was broken April 3, 1896, and the church was dedicated on May 21, 1897.

Over the past 150 years, eight of Altoona's Lutheran congregations have descended from the First Church.<sup>25</sup>

## PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: A turn-of-the-century interpretation of the Gothic Revival style, this church combines rose and pointed-arched windows with Altoona's preferences for light, rough-faced ashlar and a cross-gabled form.
2. Condition of fabric: Excellent.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Foundations: Stone.

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<sup>24</sup>Beeler, Richard E. A History of the First Evangelical Lutheran Church of Altoona, Pennsylvania (Altoona: Privately printed, 1955), 15.

<sup>25</sup>For a detailed discussion of each of these congregations, see "With the First Lutheran," Altoona Morning Tribune (May 24, 1897).

2. Walls: The limestone exterior is rough-faced, random-coursed ashlar. A frieze above the main entrance has incised quatrefoil designs. The tower in the northeast corner has a steeple which rises to a height of 60' and is covered with slate. At the northwest side of the facade is a smaller tower without a steeple. The cornerstone reads, "First Evangelical Lutheran Church Founded 1830, Built A.D. 1896."
3. Structural systems, framing: The church has stone bearing walls and wood joists.
4. Openings:
  - a. Doorways and doors: The entrance is formed by three pointed-arch doorways with tracery set in their upper portions. The side entrances are located in the first and fourth bays of the east facade.
  - b. Windows: The facade has a stained-glass rose window centered above the main entrance. Most of the other windows have pointed arches accentuated with smooth-faced ashlar trim.
5. Roof: The cross-gabled roof is covered with slate.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans: Three sets of double entrance doors lead to a vestibule containing a second group of three double doors, which in turn lead into the main auditorium. The pews are set in three aisles; the altar faces north. A curved balcony with a cast-iron rail and wood panels embellished with quatrefoil designs is located on the north wall of the church.
2. Stairways: The balcony is reached by paired wood staircases rising along the east and west walls of the building. The newel posts, turned balusters, and treads are all wood.
3. Flooring: New red carpeting in the entrance lobby and sanctuary; old red and black linoleum in the stairwell areas.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: The auditorium has a wood wainscot, with the upper pine rail grained to resemble oak, and pine baseboards below. The walls and ceiling are plaster on lath.
5. Openings:
  - a. Doorways and doors: All of the first-floor doors are masterfully grained to resemble quartered oak. The vestibule doors have pointed arches with tracery in their upper portions, and are surrounded by clustered, engaged columns.
  - b. Windows: Small pointed-arch, stained-glass windows with tracery line the south wall behind the chancel. On the east and west walls, there are two larger, pointed-arch, stained-glass windows containing biblical scenes in their lower portions, and floral motifs in pale pink, green, blue, and fuchsia above. A row of three pointed-arched windows depicting stylized bouquets of lilies in pastel blues, violets, and yellow line the east and west walls of the auditorium in the

6. Original furnishings: The quartered oak pews are original.
7. Mechanical systems:
  - a. Heating: Steam.

### PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- A. Original architectural drawings: None located.
- B. Early views: None.
- C. Bibliography:

1. Primary sources:

Altoona Morning Tribune:

"Cornerstone Laying," (July 20, 1896).

"The First Lutheran," (May 22, 1897).

"With the First Lutheran," (May 24, 1897), includes detailed historical accounts of the eight Lutheran congregations that descended from the First Church.

Altoona, Pennsylvania. New York: Sanborn Map and Publishing Co., Ltd., 1888.

Insurance Maps of Altoona, Pennsylvania. New York: Sanborn-Perris Co., 1894.

Insurance Maps of Altoona, Blair County, Pennsylvania. New York: Sanborn Map Co., 1909.

2. Secondary sources:

Beeler, Richard E. A History of the First Evangelical Lutheran Church of Altoona, Pennsylvania. Altoona: Privately printed, 1955.

Clark, Charles B. Illustrated Altoona. Altoona: Privately printed, 1896.

## CHRIST REFORMED CHURCH

(First United Church of Christ)

HABS No. PA-5514

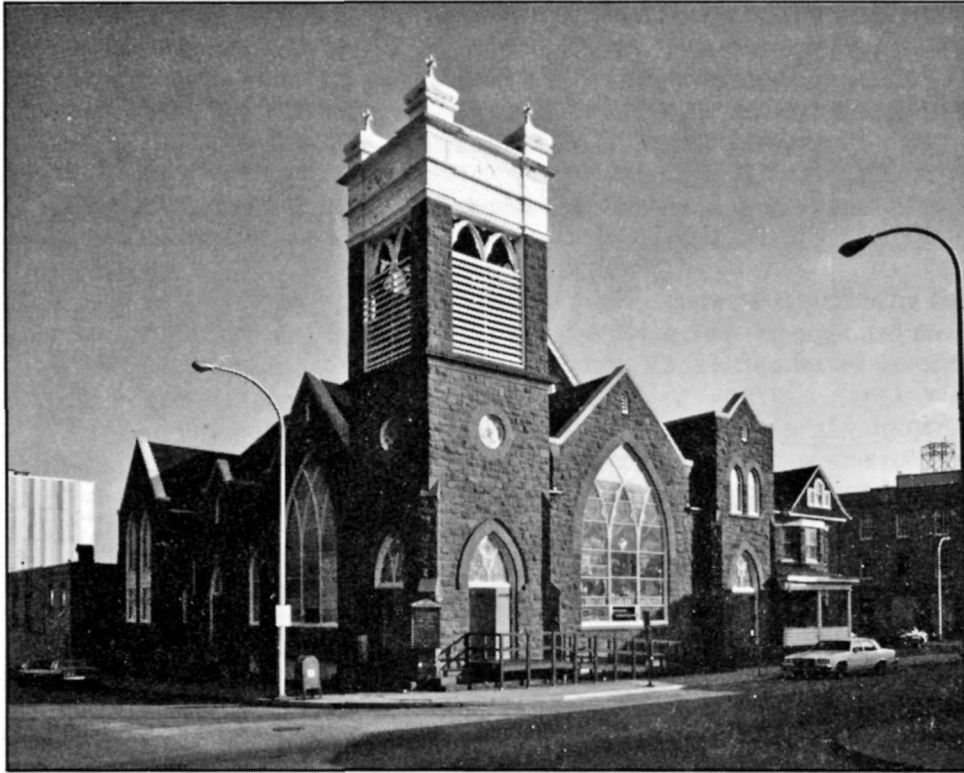


Fig. A.42 Christ Reformed Church, perspective at 12th Avenue and 15th Street, looking south.

Location: 1501-07 12th Ave. (southwest corner of 15th Street and 12th Avenue), Altoona, Blair County, Pa.

Present Owner: First United Church of Christ.

Present Use: Church.

Significance: Christ Reformed Church was the second home of a congregation which was formed in 1863 as the German Reformed Missionary Congregation in Altoona. In 1870, it changed its name to Christ Reformed Church. Built of random-coursed, ashlar brownstone with smooth-faced brownstone trim, the church and its adjoining parsonage were designed by Frederic Shollar, architect of Altoona's City Hall. Among the church's more outstanding features are a tower with belfry, crowned by four small onion domes, and several Gothic-arched windows with tracery.

### PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

#### A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: 1902-03. The cornerstone was laid June 16, 1902. The building was dedicated June 21, 1903.

2. Architect: Frederic J. Shollar (1873-1960) of Altoona was the architect. Born in Williamsburg, Pa., and educated in the public schools, Shollar bears the distinction of being Blair County's first native-born architect. He apprenticed to his father, a self-taught architect-builder, and in 1887 began the formal study of architecture in the offices of Charles M. Robinson in Altoona. Subsequently, Shollar worked as superintendent of the Glass and Garrettson planing mill, as a draftsman for the Altoona Concrete and Construction Company, and as an architect in Tyrone, Pa., from 1897 to 1900.

In 1900, Shollar opened offices in downtown Altoona. Christ Reformed Church, one of Shollar's earliest designs, is more closely related to the work of his mentor, Charles Robinson, than to the buildings for which he is best known--the brick and limestone-faced, Neoclassical structures of the 1910s and 1920s. One of the city's most respected and prolific architects, Shollar designed more than 500 residential, commercial, and ecclesiastical buildings, either individually, in association with Frank A. Hersh of Altoona (ca. 1903-15 and ca. 1925-30s), or in partnership with his son Gerald, also an architect. (Davis, II: 127-8. Altoona Mirror [January 16, 1960])

3. Original and subsequent owners: The German Reformed Missionary Congregation has occupied the site since 1864. In 1870, the congregation changed its name to Christ Reformed Church. In 1938, it took the name Christ Evangelical and Reformed Church, and in 1957, First United Church of Christ.
4. Builder, contractor, suppliers: P. W. Finn was the contractor for Christ Reformed Church. Little is known of his background and training, yet Patrick Finn (d. 1940) dominated the construction industry in the early twentieth century. In the 1890s he was associated with the firm Finn and Walsh, which advertised in Altoona's city directories as specialists in cut stone work. This firm provided stone for such buildings as James H. Windrim's Masonic Temple (1897-98). By the turn of the century, however, Finn was not only providing materials, but his crews were receiving most of the city's major contracting jobs, and were often at work on more than one building at a time.

In addition to Christ Reformed Church, P. W. Finn and Company erected the First Evangelical Lutheran Church (1896-97), First Methodist Episcopal Church (1905-06), Mishler Theatre (1905-06; and rebuilding, 1906), Rothert Building (1906), Central Trust Building (1905-06), and Eagles Lodge (1912-13). Finn and his wife first resided at 2606 Broad Ave., in a brownstone house that he constructed in 1892; this house is no longer extant. By 1900, they had moved to a mansion in Ant Hills, just south of Altoona, where they lived until the late 1920s. This landmark, a three-and-a-half-story brownstone building, with lavish mahogany trim and Art Nouveau stained-glass windows, was demolished to make way for a parking lot in 1989.

#### B. Historical Context:

The congregation of Christ Reformed Church was organized in 1863 as a mission under the care of the Westmoreland Classis of the German Reformed Church of the United States. Led by the Reverend Cyrus S. Cort, who began his work in Altoona in 1863, the congregation erected its first church and rectory at the corner of 12th Avenue and 15th Street (then known as Emma and Clara streets), in 1864-68. The church's wood spire, which rose 75', was not completed until 1873. This first church was a Gothic Revival-style building constructed of stone instead of the more typical red brick, the building material of choice for five other downtown churches. A



detached, stone parsonage stood next to the church at 1505 12th Ave.

By 1902, membership had soared to 600 congregants, compared to 450 in 1896. The old building was razed in 1902, and this larger and "more modern" church and parsonage were constructed in its place. Although the congregation of Christ Reformed Church was of German origin, English was spoken in the pulpit by the time the new church had been completed. According to one observer, "Not a fourth of the congregation would understand it if German were spoken."<sup>26</sup>

Christ Reformed Church was the parent of three other congregations. In 1888, 133 members were dismissed to form Trinity Reformed Church across the railroad tracks at 8th Avenue and 7th Street. Again, in 1897, fifty-five members were dismissed to form Grace Church. A

third group later formed yet another congregation--Salem Church, in 1909. The diverse locations of these four churches indicate that congregations of German origin were dispersed throughout the city, rather than concentrated in any one of its residential sections.<sup>27</sup>

The parsonage adjoining the church no longer serves its original function; a new parsonage has recently been erected in the Fairview section of the city.

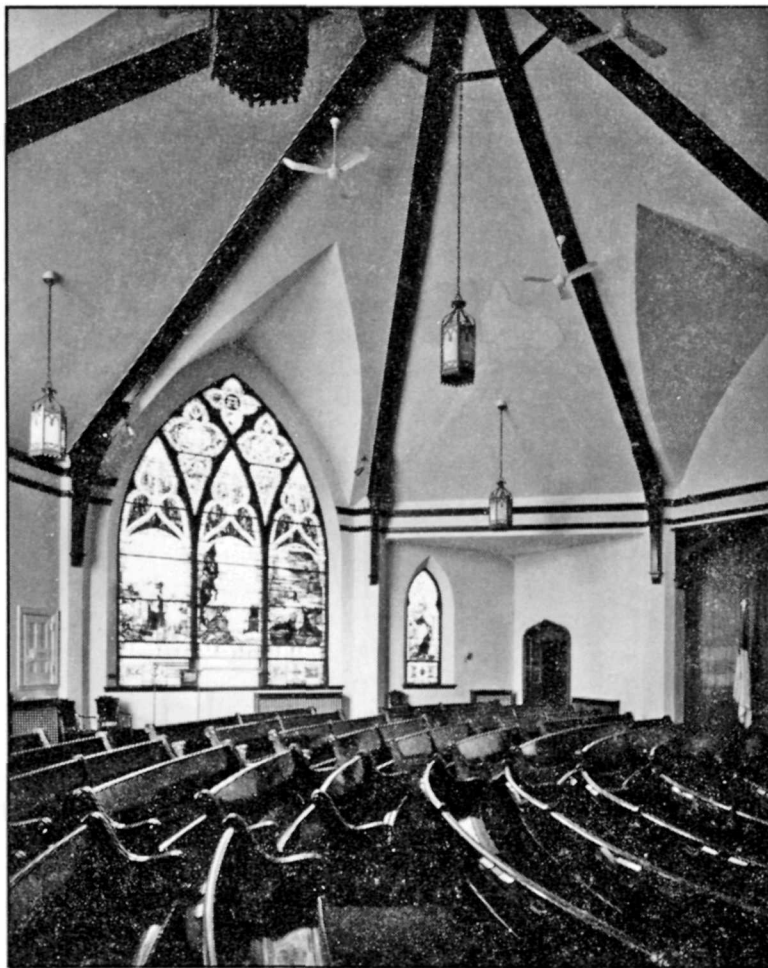


Fig. A.43 Christ Reformed Church, interior, sanctuary looking east.

## PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

### A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: The stylistic elements of Christ Reformed Church were freely adapted from both medieval and classical precedents. Its Gothic-arched exterior doors

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<sup>26</sup>Charles B. Clark, *Illustrated Altoona* (Altoona: Privately printed, 1896), 83.

<sup>27</sup>*125 Anniversary First United Church of Christ, 1863-1988* (Altoona: Privately printed, 1988), 1.

with strap hinges point to a medieval influence; the four onion domes reflect the late Victorian fascination with all things exotic; and the parsonage's Palladian window and porch are Neoclassical. Two towers and several steeply pitched cross gables add verticality to the building's low, rectangular massing.

2. Condition of fabric: Very good.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: The one-story stone church has three bays on 12th Avenue and six bays on 15th Street.
2. Foundations: Rough-cut, semi-coursed fieldstone. According to a newspaper account of the cornerstone-laying ceremony, foundation stone from the old church was used in the construction of this new building.
3. Walls: The walls are of random-coursed, ashlar brownstone with smooth brownstone accents around the windows and doors. On the asymmetrical 15th Street facade, there are three steeply pitched cross gables, each containing different sizes of Gothic-arched windows. The first bay projects slightly from the rest of the building. The 12th Avenue facade, which is also asymmetrical, has two cross gables, one with a large, Gothic-arched window, and the second with an entrance door and paired, Gothic-arched windows above.
4. Structural system: The church has stone bearing walls.
5. Openings:
  - a. Doorways and doors: There are two entrances on 15th Street and two on 12th Avenue. Primary entrances are located at both sides of the corner tower. Each of these doorways has Gothic-arched openings with stained-glass transom windows and double doors. The doors are painted bright orange and fitted with black strap hinges. The secondary entrances, which also have Gothic arches and stained-glass transom windows, are located in the third bay of the 15th Street facade and the third bay of the 12th Avenue facade.
  - b. Windows: The majority of the window openings have Gothic arches, stained glass, and tracery. The most outstanding of these are two large windows depicting biblical scenes, one in the fifth bay of the 15th Avenue side and the other in the second bay of the 12th Avenue facade. In addition, the corner tower has two round windows at the roof level. All of the tracery and other wood trim is painted white to maximize its contrast with the dark stone walls.
6. Roof:
  - a. Shape, covering: Front-gabled roof, shingled in black asphalt, with a variety of cross gables on the front and side facades.
  - b. Tower: The square corner tower, which rises 50', has a belfry crowned with four small onion domes.

C. Description of Interior: An inner vestibule leads to the hall-plan sanctuary, whose pulpit faces

north. The walls and vaulted ceiling of the sanctuary are white, finished with plaster on lath; the floor has new red carpet. The original balcony, over the eastern side of the building, was recently removed.

- D. Parsonage: The parsonage, which adjoins the church on 12th Avenue, is constructed of the same random-coursed, ashlar brownstone exterior as the church. Two-and-a-half stories high, the parsonage measures 27' x 120'. It has a hipped roof with a gable over the two-story, asymmetrical projecting bay. All of the windows have one-over-one-light, double-hung sash; there is a Palladian window in the gable. The front porch, which extends across most of the facade, has a hipped roof and Neoclassical entablature supported by Doric columns.

- E. General setting and orientation: The Christ Reformed Church and parsonage are located on southwest corner of 15th Street and 12th Avenue. In the 1900s, the church stood in a residential neighborhood composed of two-story frame and brick-veneered dwellings. The commercial development of the 1920s dramatically altered the character of this neighborhood; today the church stands opposite a five-story furniture store (now vacant), and next door to the three-story Bell of Pennsylvania Building.

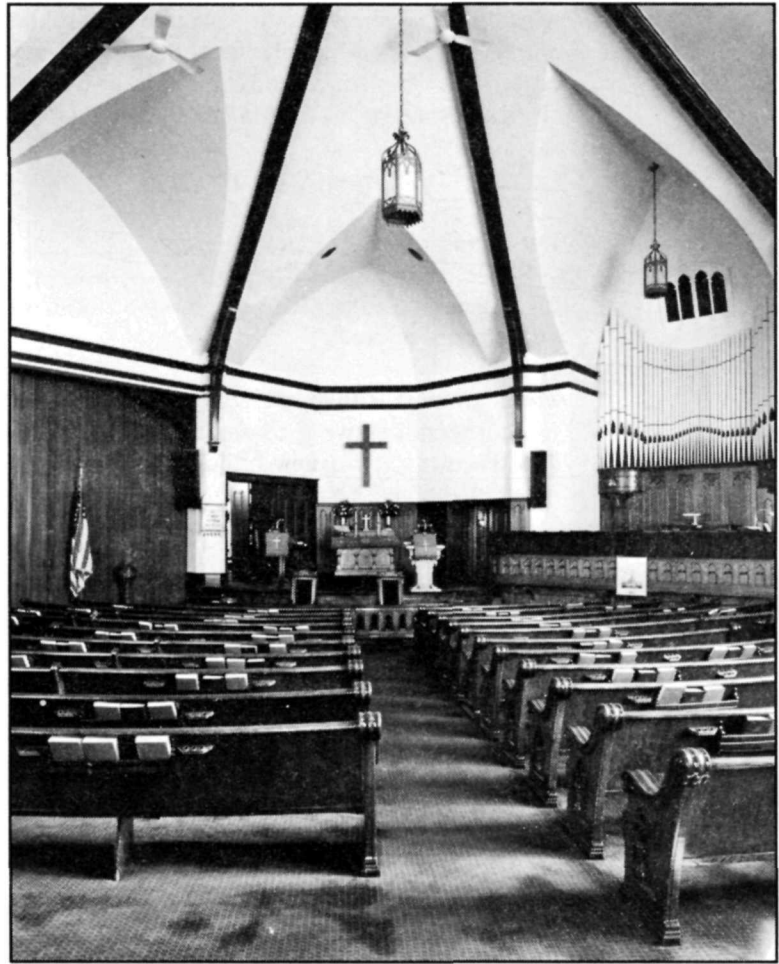


Fig. A.44 Christ Reformed Church, interior, sanctuary looking south toward altar.

### PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- A. Original architectural drawings: None located.
- B. Early view: A lithograph of the first church occupied by the German Reformed Missionary Congregation is located in the sanctuary of the church.
- C. Bibliography:
1. Primary sources:
 

"Cornerstone Laid," Altoona Morning Tribune (June 16, 1902).

Altoona, Pennsylvania. New York: Sanborn Map and Publishing Co., Ltd., 1888.

"Former Altoona Architect Dies in California." Altoona Mirror, (January 16, 1960).

Insurance Maps of Altoona, Pennsylvania. New York: Sanborn-Perris Co., 1894.

Insurance Maps of Altoona, Blair County, Pennsylvania. New York: Sanborn Map Co., 1909.

2. Secondary sources:

Clark, Charles B. Illustrated Altoona. Altoona: Privately printed, 1896.

Davis, Tarring S., ed. A History of Blair County. Vol. II. Harrisburg: National Historical Association, 1931.

125 Anniversary: First United Church of Christ, 1863-1988. [Brochure], 1988.

- D. Additional Sources: The history of the German Reformed Missionary Congregation merits further attention. In particular, it is important to know when English replaced German as the liturgical language, and under what circumstances. Did the change come about after a long and angry battle within the congregation? Information from church records and census returns could contribute to a better understanding of the assimilation process for Altoona's German-born population.

**PENN ALTO HOTEL**  
HABS No. PA-5515

Location: 1120-30 13th Ave.  
(northeast corner of  
12th Street and 13th  
Avenue), Altoona,  
Blair County, Pa.

Present Owner: Penn Alto  
Associates, Limited  
Partnership, c/o  
Maurice and Mary  
Lou Lawruk, 319A  
East Plank Road,  
Altoona, Pa, 16602.

Present Use: The Penn Alto is  
currently a  
residential hotel. It  
is in the process of  
being converted into  
federally subsidized,  
middle-income  
housing.

Significance: Perhaps better than  
any other single  
building in downtown  
Altoona, the Penn  
Alto Hotel  
symbolizes the civic  
spirit of the 1920s.  
Initiated by the  
newly formed  
chamber of

commerce and financed by private subscriptions, the hotel represented an attempt to bring convention business to downtown Altoona. The chamber saw a need to diversify the city's economy, which until then was dominated by a single industry--the Pennsylvania Railroad Company. Stylistically the nine-story building is an example of national trends rather than strictly local ones. Though local in inspiration, the project was undertaken by the George H. Stevens Company of Chicago, an early design-build firm, and consequently resembles many other large hotels in such geographically diverse places as Cleveland and Des Moines.



Fig. A.45 Penn Alto Hotel, 1120-30 13th Ave., 13th Avenue facade.

## PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

### A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: 1920-21. Ground was broken January 20, 1920; it was dedicated September 8, 1921. An addition in 1928 added 109 rooms to the 13th Avenue side.



2. Architect and builder: George H. Stevens and Company of Chicago and New York, an early design-build firm, was responsible for designing the hotel. The Stevens firm specialized in hotels, performing the planning and design functions as well as supervising the construction. In addition, Stevens and Company selected and purchased all of the hotel's furnishings. O. C. Gross of Chicago served as the project architect for Stevens and Company. F. G. Rutan, also of Stevens and Company, supervised the construction. The 1928 addition was designed by Gloecker of Pittsburgh.
3. Original and subsequent owners: In 1989, the hotel was deeded to its current owners.
4. Sub-contractors, suppliers:

Brick: 80,000 facing brick and 300,000 common brick were supplied by Altoona Brick Company.

Crushed stone: American Lime and Stone Company.

Cement and plaster: Standard Supply and Equipment Co., Altoona.

Marble, crushed stone: Appalachian Mining Co., Knoxville, Tenn.

Windows and sash: Cottage Planing Co. of Everett, Pa.

Plate glass: W. H. Goodfellow's Sons, Altoona.

Electric fixtures: Supplied by Central Electric Co., Chicago.

Plumbing: Installed by Elway and Chamberlain, Altoona.

Hardware: Russell and Irwin, Bridgeport, Conn.

Boilers: Erie City Iron Works, Erie, Pa.

Elevators: Otis Elevator Company furnished one freight and two passenger elevators.

Roof: Union Roofing Co.

(Minutes, Blair Hotel Company Building Committee, 1919-20. Penn Alto Hotel Archives).

5. Original plans and construction: Early in the planning stages, the members of the hotel's building committee ran a photograph of the proposed hotel in the Altoona Tribune. In this early version, the first-floor windows had elliptically arched transoms, rather than round-arched openings, and a hipped roof with terra cotta tile covered the building. The newspaper described the proposed design as "Spanish Renaissance" in style. By January 1920, however, the present--and less expensive--design had been finalized. ("New Penn-Alto Will Dominate City Sky-Line," Altoona Tribune [November 21, 1919]. Minutes, Blair Hotel Company Building Committee)

The Penn Alto Hotel was designed to accommodate three grand public rooms, a coffee shop, and two commercial stores on the first and mezzanine floors, and 197 guest rooms on floors three through nine. The limestone face on the first and second stories delineated the public space; large round-arched windows indicated the lobby and dining rooms. Marquees on both street facades, since removed, marked the two main entrances.

The hotel was originally an L-shaped building above the second-story level, with wings measuring 100' (13th Avenue) and 115' (12th Street) in length. On floors three through nine, corridors ran down the center of each wing, lit by a window at each end. The corridors were 6' wide with approximately twenty-eight rooms on each floor. The cost of construction was \$1.25 million, including \$250,000 for the furnishings.

6. Alterations and additions: In 1928 a nine-story addition added 109 rooms to the 13th

Avenue side, changing the L-plan hotel into a U-shaped plan.

In the 1950s, a storage annex was added to the north side of the building. Although the exterior of the hotel remains virtually unchanged, the first and mezzanine floors have recently been altered with dropped ceilings and new materials.

B. Historical Context:

In 1918, the newly formed chamber of commerce included in its program the goal of obtaining a new hotel for Altoona, a large, "modern" hotel that would attract convention business. The Blair Hotel Company was formed to undertake this project, and private subscriptions were solicited from the citizens of Altoona.

During 1919-20, the chamber of commerce published a series of promotional advertisements in the Tribune and Mirror, encouraging "the working man" as well as the "business man" to invest in bonds to finance the hotel's construction. Some of these ads appealed to the lofty ideals of cooperation and loyalty, civic pride and civic duty; others emphasized the "logic" of a sound business investment. Still others attempted to demonstrate that Altoona's future rested in the hands of its citizens (as opposed to the Pennsylvania Railroad Company--although this was never stated explicitly). These ads invoked words of wisdom from Ben Franklin: "Citizens of Altoona, we must all hang together, or assuredly, we will hang separately."<sup>28</sup>

Lists of original subscribers in the hotel's archives reveal that local businessmen and high-ranking, local bank officials were among the project's primary investors: I. C. Mishler, proprietor of the Mishler Theatre, the Silverman brothers, and Jacob Brett were listed among the largest contributors. However, numerous smaller investors also helped finance the building campaign. By 1920, 900 stockholders had invested the requisite \$1.25 million, and on September 8, 1921, the hotel opened to the public.

The Blair Hotel Company, representing the stockholders, owned the building and the land; the Altoona Hotel Company managed the facility. After lengthy negotiations, David Olmstead of Cleveland agreed to serve as the hotel's first manager, and as president of the Altoona Hotel Company. In 1925, the Blair Hotel Company took over the hotel's operation. In 1933, the Penn Alto was leased to American Hotels Corporation. Again under new management, it no longer functions as a guest hotel. The Penn Alto is currently being converted into apartments for federally subsidized housing.

## PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: The largest building in the commercial district, the Penn Alto Hotel is a nine-story building erected in two stages over a ten-year period. Its vertical, tripartite divisions--with zones marking the public spaces, guest rooms, and penthouse suites--make it fairly typical of the hotels built throughout the United States in the 1910s and 1920s by early build-design firms such as the George H. Stevens Company.

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<sup>28</sup>These advertisements are collected in five scrapbooks of articles relating to the construction of the hotel. Penn Alto Hotel Archives, Altoona.

2. Condition of fabric: Good.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: The hotel measures approximately 140' (sixteen-bay front on 13th Avenue) x 115' (fourteen bays on 12th Street) and rises nine stories. It is serviced from the rear by a 15' wide public alley.
2. Walls: The first and second stories are faced with white, Bedford limestone. Floors three through nine have red brick walls with black mortar joints. There are subtle, vertical seams in the masonry where the 1928 addition was joined to the 13th Avenue and alley facades.
3. Structural systems, framing: Steel frame clad in red tapestry brick over hollow tile.
4. Openings:
  - a. Doorways and doors: There are two main entrances, the first located in the fourth bay of the 12th Street facade, and the second located in the third bay of the 13th Avenue facade. They both have new glass and aluminum double doors.
  - b. Windows: Large, round-arched windows on the two facades indicate the lobby and dining room. Floors three through nine have simple, flat-arched windows, one pair in each structural bay. These have one-over-one-light, double-hung sash. The ninth-floor windows are round-arched, with pronounced limestone keystones. The third and ninth floor windows are set in limestone surrounds.
5. Roof:
  - a. Shape: Flat roof.
  - b. Cornice: There is a copper cornice on the two street facades with a 4' return.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans:
  - a. Basement: In addition to a barber shop, the basement of the hotel had a billiard room, valet room, store rooms, boiler and engine rooms, and main laundry. A press release described the basement as "one of the best ventilated and planned basements found anywhere." ("The Penn Alto Hotel," undated typescript for release to the press, Penn Alto Archives)
  - b. First: The first floor had two grand public rooms, the Roberdeau Room (dining room) to the left of the 12th Street entrance, and the lobby on the 13th Avenue side. The lobby measured 70' square and had a ceiling height of 18'. There were four columns, 24" in diameter, with a black and gold marble faces, and antique gold caps. These columns are still extant. To the rear of the lobby was the main desk, which had a marble counter. Opposite the desk, at a distance of 15', was a cigar and magazine stand. ("First Floor Index to Hotel's Beauty," undated newspaper clipping in the Penn Alto Archives)

- c. Mezzanine: The mezzanine, which encircled the main lobby on three sides, contained the grand ballroom, called the Logan Room, which measured 42' x 90'; a smaller banquet room, called the Oneida Room, which measured 22' x 40'; and a lounge. A state suite, consisting of four rooms, originally occupied the corner space on the mezzanine floor, overlooking 12th Street. The living room, which measures 20' x 20', was entered through the foyer. There were bedrooms on either side of the living room, and a third bedroom located off the corridor. The mezzanine has recently been sealed in with opaque glass panels.
  - d. Third-Ninth: Typical floors consist of U-shaped corridors with guest rooms on each side. Each floor was also equipped with a linen room and store room.
2. Stairways: A marble stairway opposite the 12th Street entrance leads to the mezzanine. At either end of the building is a concrete stairway which serves as an inside fire escape leading to the ground floor.
3. Flooring: The entire basement had a concrete floor, except for the barber shop and restrooms, which were covered with multi-colored tile. On the first level, the lobby had a gray Tennessee marble floor, "ground and polished to a perfectly smooth finish"; the coffee shop on 13th Avenue had a tile floor. The lobby also had specially designed Imperial Wilton rugs in Chinese blue with medallions in old ivory and two tones of blue. The Roberdeau Room and all of the guest rooms had cement floors prepared for carpet. In the guest rooms, there were black and taupe Wilton Velvet carpets. Tile floors were installed in all of the guest room bathrooms. All of the corridors were carpeted with black and white rugs "of neat design with borders to match;" these have been replaced several times. ("The Penn Alto Hotel," undated typescript for release to the press, Penn Alto Archives)
4. Wall and ceiling finish:
  - a. First floor: The lobby walls had a 4' high panelled mahogany wainscot, with a chocolate marble base, and a plaster ceiling; the wainscoting is longer extant. The dining room was finished in Nile green and had seven decorative murals, an elaborate plaster ceiling, and plaster walls. Both of these areas have been recently remodeled with dropped ceilings and new materials.
  - b. Mezzanine: The grand ballroom, or Logan Room, had "grey ivory panelled walls with antique gold decorative lines." Around the arched windows and doors, the trim was done in hand-decorated panels. The central panel featured a portrait of Chief Logan. The wall hangings were of "old Venetian red silk with antique gold braid trimmings." Silk draw curtains were hung behind the overdrapes to block out sunlight for motion picture showings. The woodwork in the room was finished in "Nile green," to match the upholstered furniture. The state suite was "panelled and finished in Old Ivory, and furnished with Italian damask hangings." The bedrooms of the suite were "specially furnished with one of Widdecomb's best designs." ("Logan Room will be Social Center," undated newspaper clipping, Penn Alto Archives)
  - c. Third-Ninth: The corridors originally had paneled wainscots with tapestry walls and a cove cornice above. Wood trim was in "Old Ivory, stippled and glazed." The hotel rooms were originally papered in "special designs" of Birge wallpapers,

produced by William Morris' firm in England. The trim inside the guest rooms was painted warm gray. ("Typical Floors Precisely Alike," undated newspaper clipping, Penn Alto Archives)

5. Openings:

- a. Doorways and doors: Most doors are of one-panel construction and were originally stained dark walnut. The doors in the two fire escapes are of fireproof kalsomine.
- b. Windows: In the Logan Room, the window openings were originally trimmed with "classic garlands interpreting relief plaster." The window openings in the fire escapes have metal frames.

6. Mechanical systems:

- a. Heating: Vacuum steam system.
- b. Lighting: Electric.
- c. Elevators: The hotel was equipped with two 350' per minute passenger and one 250' per minute freight elevators with cast-iron door fronts.

D. Site: The Penn Alto Hotel is located on the northeast corner of 12th Street and 13th Avenue.

### PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Original architectural drawings: Blueprints of architectural drawings of several proposed floor plans, dated 1919, and plans of the 1928 addition by Gloecker of Pittsburgh are in the hotel's archives.

B. Early views:

- a. The Altoona Area Public Library has a photograph of the partially clad steel frame (ca. 1920) in its local history archives. The tower of the old city hall is just visible to the left in this view.
- b. Penn Alto Hotel Archives (cited below) also contains a photograph of the building, almost complete, showing projecting rafters for the copper cornice.
- c. View of the completed hotel from the south. Altoona Tribune (September 8, 1921).

C. Bibliography:

- 1. Primary sources: The archive of the Penn Alto Hotel, located in the building, contains a wealth of information on the early history of the hotel. The following items in particular are of architectural and social-historical interest:
  - a. Five scrapbooks of newspaper clippings, 1919-25, documenting the chamber of commerce's campaign to build the hotel. Included are a series of advertisements promoting local investment in the Blair Hotel Company, and the September 7,



1921, edition of the Altoona Mirror, which contains a front-page story and supplement on the opening of the hotel.

- b. Several files of correspondence with various architectural firms, builders, and suppliers.
- c. Minutes of the Blair Hotel Company Building Committee, 1919-21, which record the decision-making processes regarding materials, construction, etc.
- d. A file of correspondence on historical matters. Background research on each of the names selected for the hotel's public rooms was conducted by a staff of professional historians.
- e. Several copies of lists of original subscribers, labelled "confidential--not for publication."
- f. References to a builders' strike during the hotel's construction, which can be found scattered throughout the correspondence and scrapbooks.

2. Secondary sources:

Altoona Centennial Booklet: Noteworthy Personages and Historical Events. Altoona: privately printed, 1949.

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**CATHEDRAL OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT**  
HABS No. PA-5516



**Fig. A.46** Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament, 1301 13th Ave.

Location: 1301 13th Ave., south side of 13th Avenue between 12th and 14th streets, Altoona, Blair County, Pa.

Present Owner: Altoona-Johnstown Catholic Diocese.

Present Use: Church.

Significance: Overlooking the city of Altoona from the peak of Gospel Hill, the Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament is a landmark on the Altoona skyline. Although construction began in 1924 to replace a nineteenth-century parish church, it halted during the Depression, and resumed again in 1959. As a result, the cathedral's exterior represents a stark, academic, interpretation of Italy's early Renaissance cathedrals, while its interior, embellished with a modern blend of aluminum, glass and marble, is clearly a product of 1959-60.

**PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION**

**A. Physical History:**

1. Date of erection: 1924-31; 1959-60. Ground was broken September 17, 1924. The cornerstone-laying ceremony, which coincided with the fiftieth anniversary of the Diocese, took place on May 30, 1926. The unfinished cathedral was dedicated September 7, 1931.

2. Architect: George I. Lovett of Philadelphia, (1872-1958). Alfred D. Reid of Pittsburgh served as architect for the completion of the interior in 1959-60.
3. Original and subsequent owners: St. John's Roman Catholic Parish purchased five lots from John Wright in the early 1850s. A lot was acquired on October 20, 1853, for \$75, and on April 10, 1854, four more lots were purchased for the sum of \$200; the cathedral and rectory stand on the ground acquired in the second transaction.
4. Builder, contractor, suppliers: Hubert Clark of Altoona was the contractor. Bethlehem Steel magnate Charles Schwab donated all of the structural steel.
5. Original plans and construction: The original plans calling for a \$1 million structure were halted in 1931. Prior to its completion, the interior of the building had exposed brick and steel, with projecting joists for the second-floor balcony. The windows had clear glass; a 1932 newspaper article noted that eventually all of the windows would be replaced with art glass, but that the work would take years. The original altar was wood, surmounted by a baldachino, and the temporary altar rail was of frame construction with metal trimmings. Temporary pews to accommodate 1,200 people also were installed in 1931.
6. Alterations and additions: In 1959, architect Alfred Reid of Pittsburgh was hired to complete the interior of the cathedral. Renovation of the side chapels was underway in summer 1989.

B. Historical Context:

St. John's Roman Catholic Church was established on this site in 1854. The founding parish included many families who were employed in the construction of the Allegheny Portage Railroad and the Staple Bend tunnel before settling in Altoona to work in the PRR shops. The first church was a small frame building, which was replaced in 1871 by a Gothic Revival-style, two-story, brick structure with twin spires rising 200 feet.

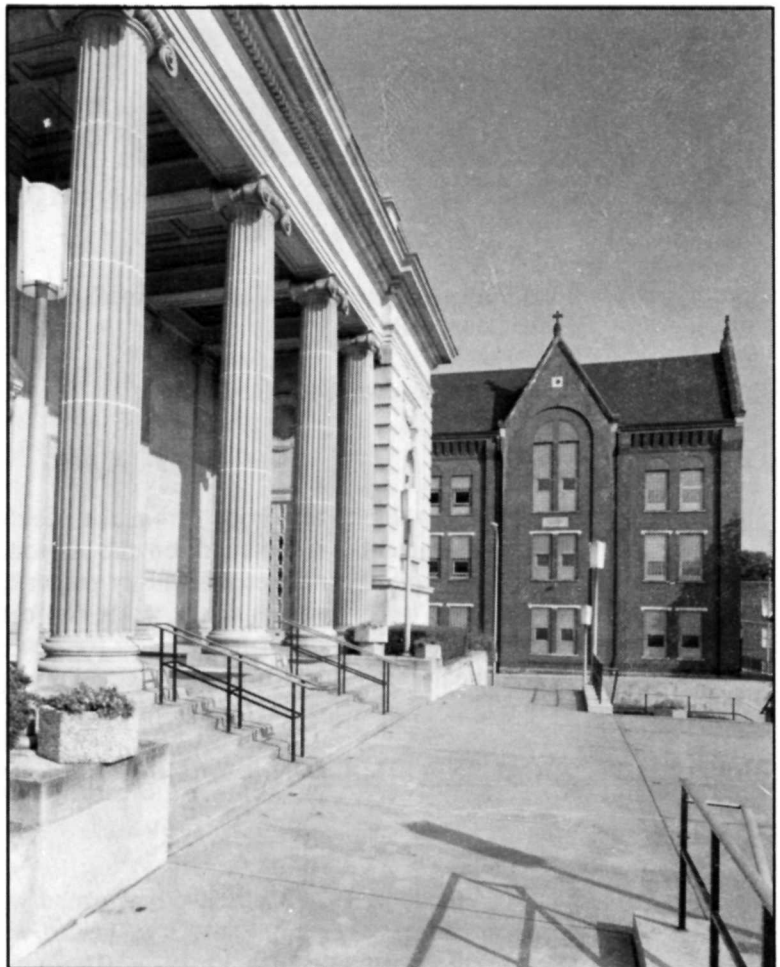


Fig. A.47 Perspective of detail of 12th Street entrance to Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament and St. John's School.

Several private residences, as well as the landmark St. John's Convent building, had to be demolished to make way for the construction effort, which commenced September 17, 1924. The unfinished building was dedicated September 7, 1931, before a crowd of 5,000. An Altoona Mirror editorial of the same day had this to say about the new cathedral: "Its unmistakable message to the onlooker as the years roll on must surely be that belief in God and His Son the Redeemer of the World, still pervades the heart of mankind and the desire to worship Him is paramount in the soul of men and women."

Although several auxiliary buildings were demolished when the cathedral was built, St. John's School, dating from the 1880s, survives across the street. A Tudor-style convent was constructed next door to the school in 1924, completing a visually varied cathedral complex. A temporary chapel for use by St. John's parish was also erected at 1306-08 12th Ave. in 1924. Designed by local architect D. G. Puderbaugh and erected by contractor Hubert Clark, the two-story brick and tile building measured 50' x 120'. During the 1930s the social hall was the scene of theatrical productions and basketball games, and later served as a popular skating rink. It was demolished in 1961 to afford a better view of the cathedral from the downtown area. (Altoona Mirror [March 13, 1924; April 26, 1961].)

## PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

### A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: On the exterior, the limestone-clad Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament is a stark, academic, interpretation of Italy's early Renaissance cathedrals, while its interior, embellished with a modern blend of aluminum, glass, and marble, is clearly a product of 1959-60.
2. Condition of fabric: Excellent.

### B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: The cathedral measures 240' (13th Avenue) x 120' (13th Street) and rises 197' to the pinnacle of the dome.
2. Walls: The cathedral is faced in Indiana limestone laid in courses of smooth-faced ashlar. Forty-eight approach steps lead to the main entrance, which is flanked by two 11' niches containing bronze sculptures. The entrance also has six Ionic columns in antis surmounted by a cornice above which is a smaller second story with four fluted Corinthian pilasters that support a classical pediment.
3. Structural systems, framing: Steel and reinforced concrete. The dome is supported by twelve steel columns, each weighing 57 tons and measuring 108'-4" in length.
4. Openings:
  - a. Doorways and doors: Three glass entrance doors feature a fretwork of blue and gold anodized aluminum installed during the 1960s. There are two secondary entrances on 13th Avenue, each topped by circular window.
  - b. Windows: The second story of the entrance has round-arched windows, as does the nave. The dome has twenty-four windows--eight large ones at the base, eight dormer windows at the second tier, and eight eyebrow windows at the top.

In addition, there is a skylight at the pinnacle of the dome.

5. Roof:

- a. Shape: The cathedral has a flat roof with a cross-gabled clerestory section. This upper roof, on which the dome sits, is slate.
- b. Dome: Faced with Indiana limestone, the steel and reinforced-concrete dome is 65' in diameter and rises 120' above the clerestory roof of the building.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans: The cathedral is in the shape of a Roman cross, having three longitudinal aisles, and a dome placed at the intersection of the transepts and the nave. The main entrance, organ, and choir lofts are located opposite the altar. Massive piers, six on each side, separate the nave from the side aisles and chapels. The floor-to-ceiling height of the nave is 75'.
2. Stairways: A circular stairway leads to a colonnaded balcony at the base of the dome.
3. Flooring: The entrance porch and narthex are paved in marble; the nave has a wood floor; the semicircular apse has a multi-colored marble floor with green and gold mosaics.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: Plaster on lath. The ceiling is vaulted and richly panelled.

D. Rectory:

A three-story rectory measuring 43' x 79' is located on the southeast corner of 13th Avenue and 14th Street. Completed in 1930, the rectangular building faced in Indiana limestone is joined to the cathedral by a one-story hyphen. The cost of the rectory and adjacent garage was \$100,000.

The rectory has a center-hall plan, with a suite of three offices, the dining room, kitchen and laundry facilities on the first floor. The second floor has the rector's study and chambers, the assistant's study and chambers and two guest rooms. Housekeepers' and maids' quarters, as well as study rooms and additional guest chambers, are located on the third floor.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Original architectural drawings: None located.

B. Early views:

1. The Altoona Mirror published a dedication edition September 2, 1931, which contains several photographs of the building.
2. "Ward-Wide News" (Altoona: Ward Trucking Corporation, 1960), includes photographs of the interior prior to its completion and documents the finishing work underway. Altoona Mirror library clippings files.



## C. Bibliography:

## 1. Primary sources:

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"Cathedral Parish To Have Rectory," (April 21, 1931).

"Cathedral To Be Opened in Fall," (May 15, 1931).

"Civic Plaza Proposed at Cathedral," (August 7, 1973).

"Fine Cathedral is Now Assured," (date illegible).

"Group Reviews Plans for Plaza, New Mausoleum," (May 2, 1974).

Lovett, George I. "New Cathedral is Model Structure," (September 2, 1931).

"Priest's Home is Now Occupied," (March 24, 1931).

Altoona, Pennsylvania. New York: Sanborn Map and Publishing Co., Ltd., 1888.

Building Record, Tax Assessment Office, Blair County Courthouse, Hollidaysburg, Pa.

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## 2. Secondary sources:

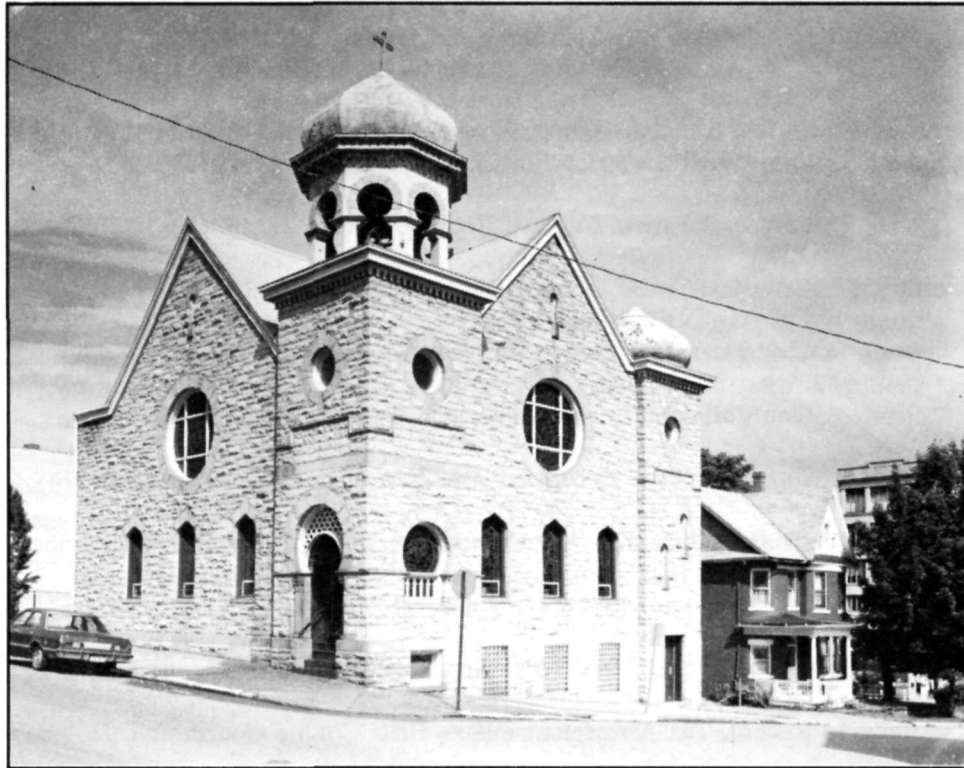
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"Cathedral Parish Same Age as City." Altoona Mirror (September 2, 1931).

Tatman, Sandra and Roger W. Moss. Biographical Dictionary of Philadelphia Architects. Philadelphia: The Athenaeum, 1985. Contains a short biography and project list for George I. Lovett.

## E. Additional Sources: The American Institute of Architects Archives, and the Athenaeum of Philadelphia both hold collections of Lovett's papers and architectural drawings which may be useful for more extended research on the cathedral.

**HEBREW REFORM TEMPLE**  
**(Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church)**  
HABS No. PA-5517



**Fig. A.48** Hebrew Reform Temple, 1433 13th Ave.

Location: 1433 13th Ave. (southeast corner of 15th Street and 13th Avenue), Altoona, Blair County, Pa.

Present Owner: Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church.

Present Use: Church.

Significance: Hebrew Reform Temple is distinguished by its eclectic Moorish exterior, an 1898 design by Altoona's premier architect, Charles M. Robinson. Constructed for the Mountain City Hebrew Reform Congregation, a successor of the Orthodox congregation Adavath Achim, which organized in 1874, the building documents the early spread of reform Judaism beyond this country's major urban centers. In 1924, Altoona's Greek Orthodox community purchased and renovated the structure, renaming it Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church. The building continues to serve as their house of worship and a religious center for a four-county region.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: 1898. The cornerstone-laying ceremonies took place May 1, 1898; the

temple was dedicated September 11, 1898. The building was rededicated as Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church in 1924.

2. Architect: C. M. Robinson of Altoona was the architect.
3. Original and subsequent owners: In 1924, the Mountain City Hebrew Reform Congregation sold the property to Anast Notopolous and Charles Miles, on behalf of Altoona's Greek Orthodox congregation, for \$ 37,500. The transaction included three frame houses adjoining the temple on 13th Avenue, which had a total frontage of 70' and a depth of 120'. The houses are no longer extant.
4. Contractor: Orr and Blake, 7th Avenue and 5th Street, Altoona.
5. Original plans and construction: The temple was designed to accommodate a congregation of 300. A smooth-faced ashlar band delineates the basement floor, which originally had four Sunday School classrooms.
6. Alterations and additions: The north- and west-facing ogee-arched windows were altered in the late 1960s when stained-glass windows were installed, and several of the flat-arched windows on the ground level have been filled with glass block. Originally, the ogee-arched windows lighting the sanctuary had green glass.<sup>29</sup> The interior of the building has been remodeled several times--in 1924, when the temple changed hands; in 1935 following a fire that damaged the sanctuary; and again in 1955, when part of the balcony was taken down. Also in 1955, canvas murals depicting various saints were mounted on the ceiling of the sanctuary; these are still extant. The ceiling fans in the sanctuary were installed in 1986. An adjacent parish house on 15th Street was demolished in the 1960s.

- B. Historical Context: The Orthodox Jewish congregation, first known as Adavath Achim (Hebrew for brotherly love), was founded in 1874 with twenty-three members. The decision to adopt the Reform liturgy was made in 1877. In 1890 the congregation was reorganized with thirty-eight members and renamed the Mountain City Hebrew Reform Congregation. Members met in homes and rented meeting halls until the temple was completed in 1898. In 1924, the congregation sold the temple and moved to a new site at 3004 Union Ave., reflecting the more general movement of Altoona's population from downtown to the affluent suburban developments of Allegheny Furnace and Llysven. Since 1922, the congregation has been known as Beth Israel.

The dedication of the reform temple, on September 11, 1898, was an important local event. Attracting an estimated 1,000 people of various denominations, the dedication ceremonies took on the character of a highly-charged political event, as Altoona Rabbi Henry Klein spoke of the significance of the building in terms of world affairs, of passing into a new era. With the Spanish-American War as his point of reference, Klein equated Spanish intolerance in Cuba and the suffering of the Cuban people with the oppression of the Jews in Europe. He saw in the American synagogue, which was "founded in freedom of thought, conscience, and religion," a lasting refuge from tyranny. In a volatile, turn-of-the-century political climate fueled by nativist sentiments and increasing agitation over the role of America in an imperialist war, Rabbi Klein also viewed his dedication address as an opportunity to emphasize the loyalty and patriotism of American Jewry. "The Jew is intensely loyal and patriotic," he stated. "He blesses this

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<sup>29</sup>Helen Papadeus, interviews by Nancy Spiegel, Altoona, Pa., summer 1989.

government every day for the blessings it bestows, and consecrates his temples in the spirit of the loftiest American principles."<sup>30</sup> The adaptation of the more accommodating reform liturgy included the introduction of choir music during services, and establishment of a Sunday school. It also required that religious services be conducted in the vernacular, with the exception of a few prayers, and that seating be mixed.

While Altoona's Jewish community grew relatively quickly, the Greek community in Altoona remained small throughout the early twentieth century, consisting of sixty-seven families, and taking in about 500 people. Previous to acquiring the temple, families held religious services in a rented meeting hall in the Shannon building on 11th Avenue.

## PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

### A. General statement:

1. Architectural character: Since there is no specifically Hebraic design tradition, many late nineteenth-century congregations turned to adaptations of Byzantine and Moorish architecture for their temples and synagogues. Hebrew Reform Temple's horseshoe- and ogee-pointed arches, and two square towers crowned with onion domes, contribute to such a Moorish aesthetic, while the smooth- and rough-faced ashlar exterior and cross-gabled form point to a particularly local ecclesiastical preference.
2. Condition of fabric: Very good.

### B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: The two-story stone church measures 53' on 15th Street and 48' on 13th Avenue.
2. Foundations: Stone.
3. Walls: The exterior has a rough-faced, random-coursed ashlar limestone surface, accented with smooth-faced limestone trim. The cornerstone reads, "Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church, 1917," indicating the year the congregation was formed, and not the date of the cornerstone-laying ceremony. The east facade, which faced a row of frame houses, is a blank wall.
4. Structural systems, framing: Stone bearing walls and wood joists.
5. Openings:
  - a. Doorways and doors: The primary entrance is on 13th Avenue, through a horseshoe-arched entranceway fitted with wrought-iron grillwork similar to that found on Altoona's Masonic Temple. There are side entrances on the west and south facades. All exterior doors are V-joint, slab doors, painted brown.
  - b. Windows: The ground-floor windows are flat arched, with smooth-faced ashlar

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<sup>30</sup>"Synagogue is Dedicated," Altoona Morning Tribune (September 12, 1898), 1.

lintels and sills. On the second floor, the openings are horseshoe- and ogee-arched; there is also a round-arched window on the south facade to light the stair landing. Upper windows on the street and avenue sides are round.

6. Roof:

- a. Shape: Cross-gabled roof with new asphalt shingles.
- b. Towers: There are two square towers crowned by onion domes. The larger tower in the northwest corner has a belfry formed by horseshoe arches below the dome, which is surmounted by a cross. The tower at the southwest corner encloses the stairway.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans:

- a. Basement: The basement consists of a large open hall and a kitchen.
- b. First: The sanctuary has a hall plan, with the balcony on the west wall.
- c. Attic: Inaccessible.

2. Stairway: A stairway is located opposite the main entrance and rises along the western wall of the building, with the landing on the south wall. The handsome newel post, turned balusters, and treads are pine.

3. Flooring: The floor of the sanctuary has been covered with wall-to-wall carpet.

4. Wall and ceiling finish: All of the walls and ceilings are finished with plaster on lath, except for the basement, which has a drop ceiling and new panelling.

5. Doorways and doors: All of the interior doors have six rectangular panels and molded surrounds with bull's-eye corner blocks.

6. Mechanical systems:

- a. Heating: Steam.
- b. Lighting: The crystal chandelier suspended from the sanctuary ceiling was purchased by the congregation in 1925. Anast Notopolous, a local theater owner and prominent member of the church, was able to acquire the fabulous showpiece through his contacts in the theater industry.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Original architectural drawings: None located.

B. Early views: None located.

C. Interviews: Helen Papadeus, who grew up as a member of the Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church. Interviews with Nancy Spiegel, Altoona, Pa., summer 1989.



## D. Bibliography:

## 1. Primary sources:

"Cornerstone Laying," Altoona Morning Tribune (May 2, 1898).

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"Greeks Purchase New Church Here," Altoona Mirror (October 1, 1924).

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## 2. Secondary sources:

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Sell, Jesse C. Twentieth Century History of Altoona and Blair County, Pennsylvania. Chicago: Richmond-Arnold Publishing Co., 1911.

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## E. Additional Sources: Most of the records relating to the Mountain City Hebrew Reform Congregation have been sent to the Hebrew Union College Archives, Cincinnati Ohio--a national repository for the history of reform Judaism in America.

**MASONIC TEMPLE**  
HABS No. PA-5518



**Fig. A.49** Masonic Temple, 11th Street facade.

Location: 1111-19 11th St., Altoona, Blair County, Pa.

Present Owner: Maurice and Mary Lou Lawruk, 319A East Plank Road, Altoona, Pa., 16602.

Present Use: The first floor contains two stores. The second, third, and fourth floors are vacant.

Significance: The Masonic Temple is one of Altoona's few remaining large red-brick buildings from the nineteenth century. Designed by Philadelphia architect James H. Windrim, the temple's interesting exterior is complemented by a well-organized interior that is in virtually unaltered condition.

## PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

### A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: 1889-90. The cornerstone was laid August 13, 1889. The building was dedicated May 20, 1890.
2. Architect: James H. Windrim of Philadelphia was the architect. George H. Smith of the firm Smith and Robinson, Altoona, supervised the construction. A handwritten note on the drawings concerning the dimensions of the windows was signed by Charles Marks, who was probably Windrim's project manager in Philadelphia.

James H. Windrim (1840-1919) achieved great fame when, at age 27, he won the competition for Philadelphia's Masonic Temple. Constructed according to his design from 1868-73, the temple, which cost more than \$1 million, was the first large public building on Penn Square. Windrim went on to design numerous other buildings in Philadelphia and other eastern cities before being named Supervising Architect of the Treasury in 1889 (shortly after designing this building), where he was responsible for all federal construction. He held this post until 1891, when he moved back to Philadelphia to become Director of Public Works for the city until 1895. He then returned to private practice. Windrim was an active Mason, first joining a Pittsburgh lodge in 1864, then Philadelphia Lodge No. 72, of which he was Worshipful Master in 1873. (Poppeliers, 1962, 4-18.)

3. Original and subsequent owners: In 1989 the Masons sold it to the present owner.

4. Contractor, suppliers:

Contractor: Henry Shank, of Erie, Pa.

Cut stone work: Finn and Welsh.

Painting, glazing, etc.: S. M. Griffith.

Tin work: Eaby & Son.

Plumbing and gas fitting: George Stone.

Furniture: George Jackson, dealer; manufactured by A. B. and E. L. Shaw, Boston.

Carpet: Wm. Murray and Son, through Wooster Manufacturing Co.

Guerney Hot Water System: Installed by Reinecke & Co., Pittsburgh.

Pavement: Wehn Paving Co., Philadelphia and New York.

(Altoona Tribune [May 22, 1890])

5. Original plans and construction: The temple was designed to house commercial activities on the first and second floors and Masonic activities on the third and fourth. This division is reinforced on the interior by separate stairways, so that the public would not wander upstairs. The different uses are marked on the exterior by an elaborate stringcourse. Except for the stores on the first floor, most of the original plan remains.
6. Alterations and additions: In 1925-26, an addition was planned but not built. Hersh and Shollar, architects of Altoona, drew up plans to double the size of the present building by adding a 50'-wide section along the entire rear wall. Although the new section contained six stories, it was the same height as the original. The new plan put an elevator core behind the stairs and put a new corridor on the cross axis.

In 1953, the tower and the spires on the tourelles above the cornice were removed. Also, the glass-block windows were installed. The storefronts have received many changes over the years.

#### B. Historical Context:

The Mountain Lodge No. 281, Free and Accepted Masons, was founded in December 1853, when Altoona was barely 4 years old. The lodge first met in Patton's Hall. On November 14, 1854, the lodge purchased the Presbyterian Church at 12th Avenue and 13th Street, but six months later the building was destroyed by fire. In 1857 the Masons bought Campbell Hotel on 12th Street; they added a third story and moved in in February 1857. They stayed at this site until the new temple was built.

Laying the cornerstone for the new temple was an important event. Occurring on August 20, 1889, it was attended by the Right Worshipful Deputy Grandmaster, J. Simpson Africa (a well-known local historian), and Brother A. M. Lloyd of Lodge No. 282 of Hollidaysburg, for many years the District Deputy Grandmaster who had been present at the founding of Lodge No. 281 in 1853. Among other items deposited in the cornerstone were all of the local newspapers of the day, as well as newspapers describing the Johnstown Flood, which had occurred just three months earlier.

The building was dedicated on May 20, 1890. The temple included rooms for the Mountain Lodge No. 281 as well as for smaller lodges, such as Logan Lodge No. 490, founded in 1871. At the dedication, the newspaper noted that the bigger

building was needed "not only for the better convenience and comfort of the fraternity, but that would be conspicuous among the ornamental public structures in the city of Altoona."

According to a lodge history, the lodge had invested in building and loan associations, which provided a good return on the investment. Construction of the temple cost \$84,000, including the land. The Masons soon bought the adjoining lot for \$17,000, and built a small stable there.

The Masons built a new temple, along Pleasant Valley Boulevard east of intown Altoona, in 1984-85. In it they replicated the exact dimensions of the Grand Lodge Room, and reinstalled all of the original furniture. In addition, the three stained-glass windows from the second floor landing were removed from the old temple and placed in storage there. A drawing of Windrim's Masonic Temple in Philadelphia is also displayed in the new Banqueting Hall.



Fig. A50 Masonic Temple, detail of main entrance, 11th Street.

## PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

### A. Architectural Character:

1. General Statement: The massiveness of this red brick building is broken by a lively

design which incorporates gables and towers to add verticality to the building's low, rectangular massing.

2. Condition of fabric: Good.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions:  
The building measures approximately 120' x 50' x 70' to the roof. It was 107' to the top of the steeple.

2. Foundations: Not visible.

3. Walls: Philadelphia red pressed brick laid in stretcher bond. At the first floor, there are rusticated stone piers at the corners and flanking the entrance. There are also rusticated stone lintels over the third-floor windows. The second story is separated from the third by a stringcourse, separating the public functions of the building from the temple. The third and fourth stories are arranged in seven

bays. The two bays at each end are identical; the three center bays are separated by tourelles, and each bay has a different composition. Ornament includes the name "MASONIC TEMPLE" in galvanized iron over the entrance, and the date stone ("A.1889.D") in the center between the third and fourth floors.

4. Structural system: The building has brick bearing walls. Columns on the first and second floors support wood joists. The 46'-wide open space on the third floor is achieved by 4'-deep plate girders, identified as iron, which are 3/8" thick, spaced 8' apart. The roof above the fourth floor is constructed of a king-post truss with timber beams and wrought iron-tension rods.
5. Openings:

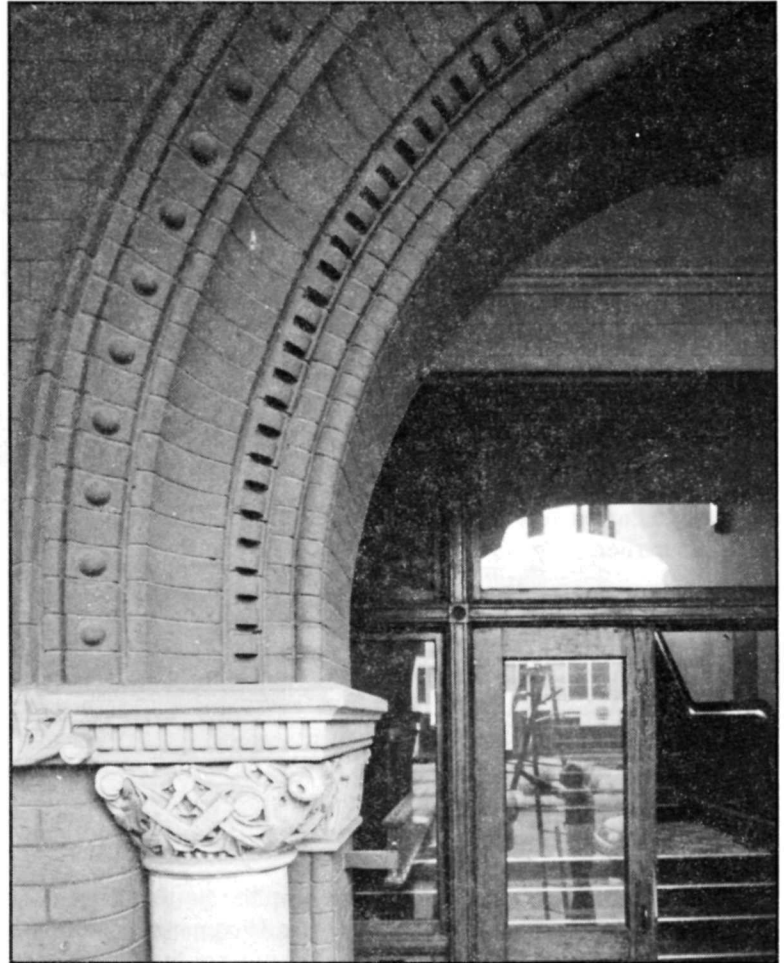


Fig. A.51 Masonic Temple, detail of capital and arch in foyer of main entrance, 11th Street.



- a. Doorways and doors: The main entrance, in the center of the facade, is recessed from the exterior wall, creating a vestibule. Behind a set of iron gates, since removed, was another small vestibule, then the wood double doors.
- b. Windows: The first-floor windows are all modern storefronts. At the second floor, the windows have paired, one-over-one-light flat-arched sash. At the third floor, the windows are 12' high with one-over-one-light sash. On the fourth floor, the windows have round-arched, one-over-one-light sash. On both the third and fourth floors, all of the windows in the 12th Avenue end of the building, on three sides, have been replaced by glass block.

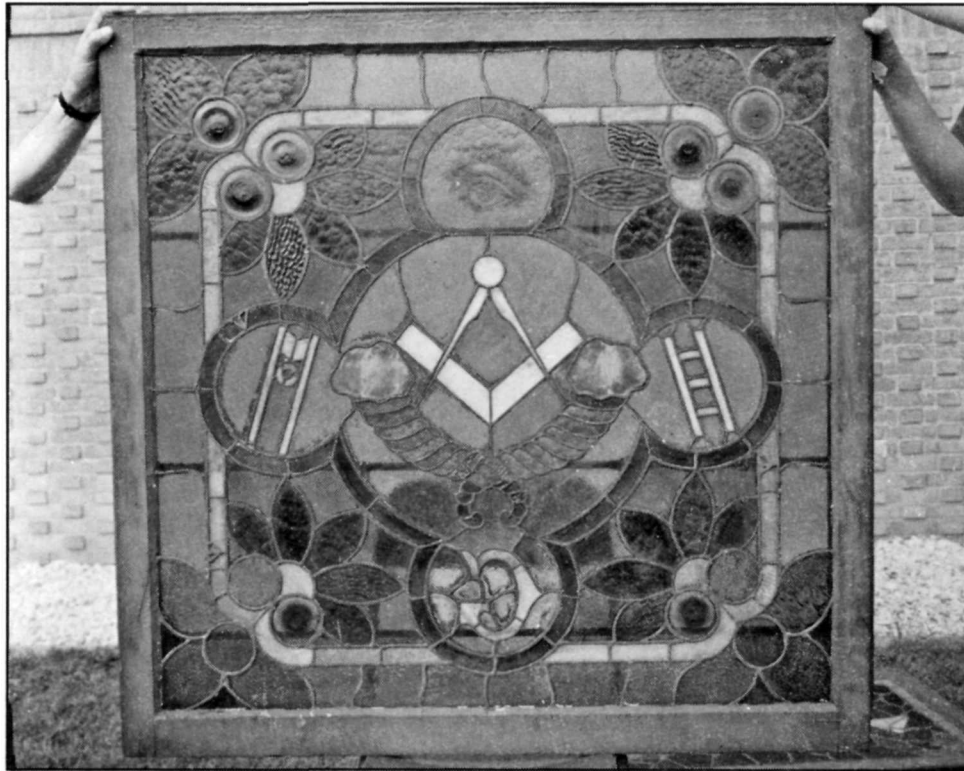


Fig. A.52 Masonic Temple, stained-glass window removed from first- and second-floor landing.

All the windows lighting the stairway in the rear facade were ornamented. The window between the first and second floors was described in 1890: "At the head of the first landing is a wide French plate-glass window with stained glass in the upper sashes, the emblems of the order showing off in the latter to good effect." (*Altoona Tribune*, [May 22, 1890])

6. Roof:

- a. Shape: Low hipped roof.
- b. Cornice: Galvanized iron in a modillion-like design
- c. Steeple: The steeple, which has been removed, consisted of a 12'-high brick portion, about 15' square, topped by a 32'-high pyramidal roof. It was located near the front of the building, above the third bay from the 11th Avenue end.



Fig. A.53 Masonic Temple, interior, second-floor hallway.

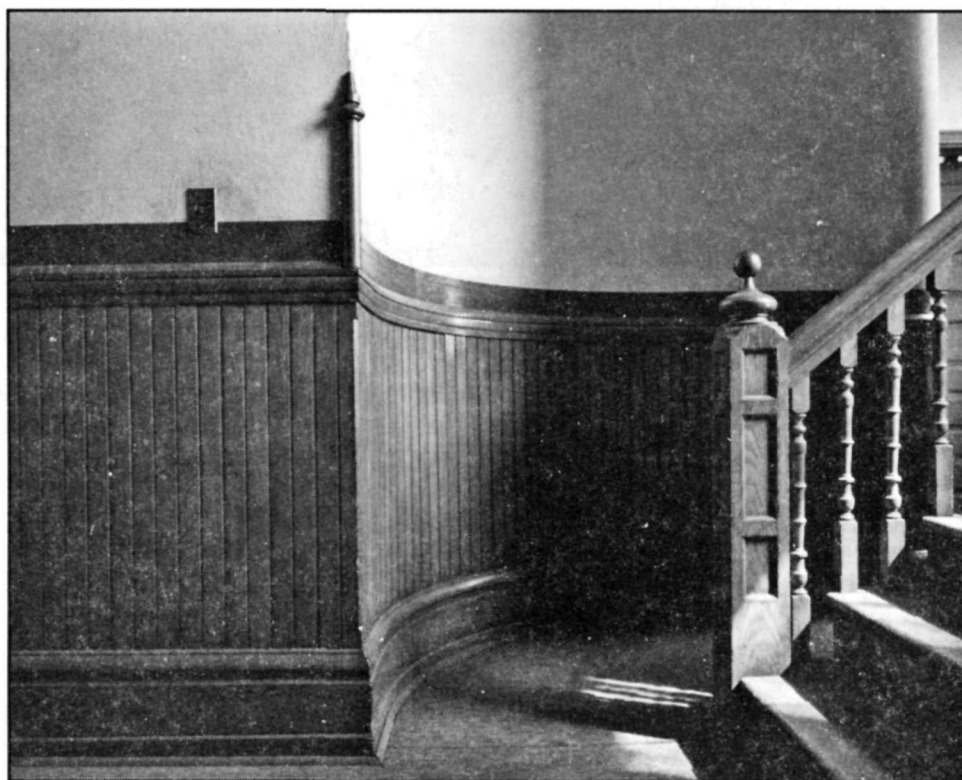


Fig. A.54 Masonic Temple, interior, detail of third-floor wainscoting and stair baluster.

Two gables rise above the cornice, one on the 12th Avenue end and one on the front, above the third bay from the 12th Avenue end.

B. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans:

- a. First: Originally, the first floor had six stores, "of good depth and handsomely lighted, the windows being of French plate glass." These have been replaced by three stores with modern storefronts. The floor-to-ceiling height is 13'-6".
- b. Second: A center hall running longitudinally is lit by windows at either end. Offices open off the hall; there are seven along the front of the building and five along the rear. The floor-to-ceiling height is 12'-6".
- c. Third: The Grand Lodge Room on the 12th Avenue end measures 68'-4" x 46'-0" and has raised platforms on four sides. There is also a Smaller Lodge Room measuring 22'-0" x 36'-3" on the 11th Avenue end, and other anterooms in between. The floor-to-ceiling height is 16'.
- d. Fourth: The Banqueting Hall and Drill Room on the 12th Avenue end measures 46'-8" x 79'-2". Opposite is a smaller room, the Armory, with an anteroom. In the middle is the kitchen, with a pantry leading to the Banqueting Hall. The floor-to-ceiling height is 14'.

2. Stairway: The stairway between the first and second floors is located opposite the entrance. It runs in two directions with a landing along the rear wall. At the upper

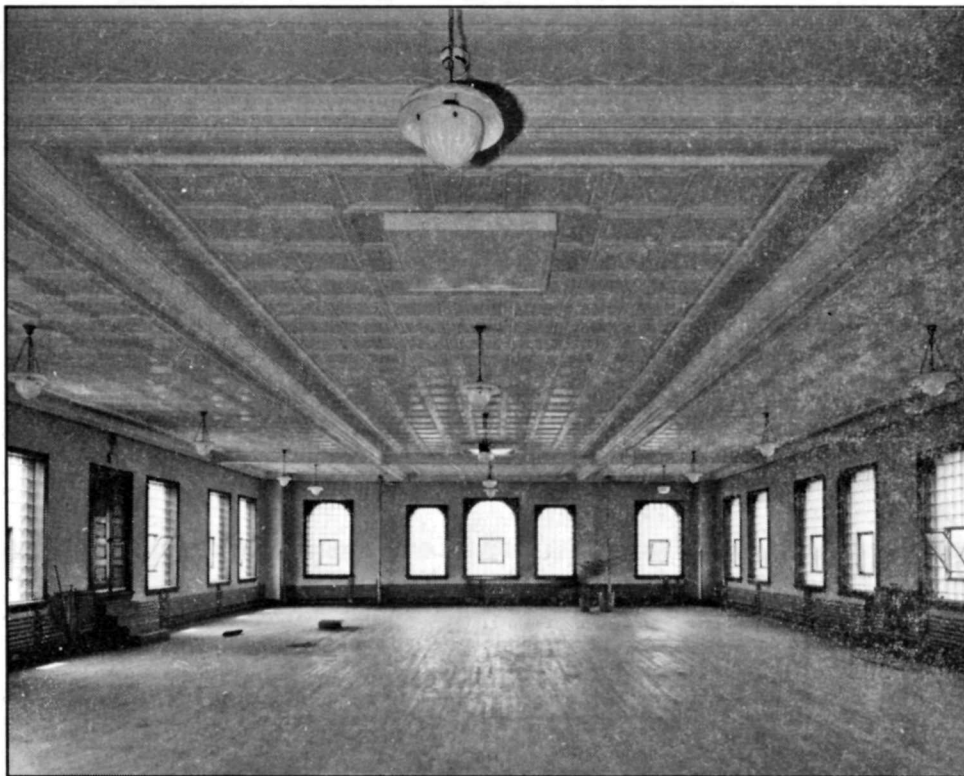


Fig. A55 Masonic Temple, interior, fourth-floor banqueting hall and drill room.

floors the stairway is located closer to the 11th Avenue end. The stairway has handsome newel posts and turned balusters on all floors. It has been enclosed by fire walls on the second, third, and fourth floors.

3. Flooring: Pine. The landings and stairs were originally covered with linoleum "of a neat and attractive pattern." The lodge rooms on the third floor originally had Brussels carpets.

4. Wall and ceiling finish: The outer vestibule has a glazed-tile wainscot. The inner vestibule, stairway, and second-floor hall have wainscots of vertical beaded boards and

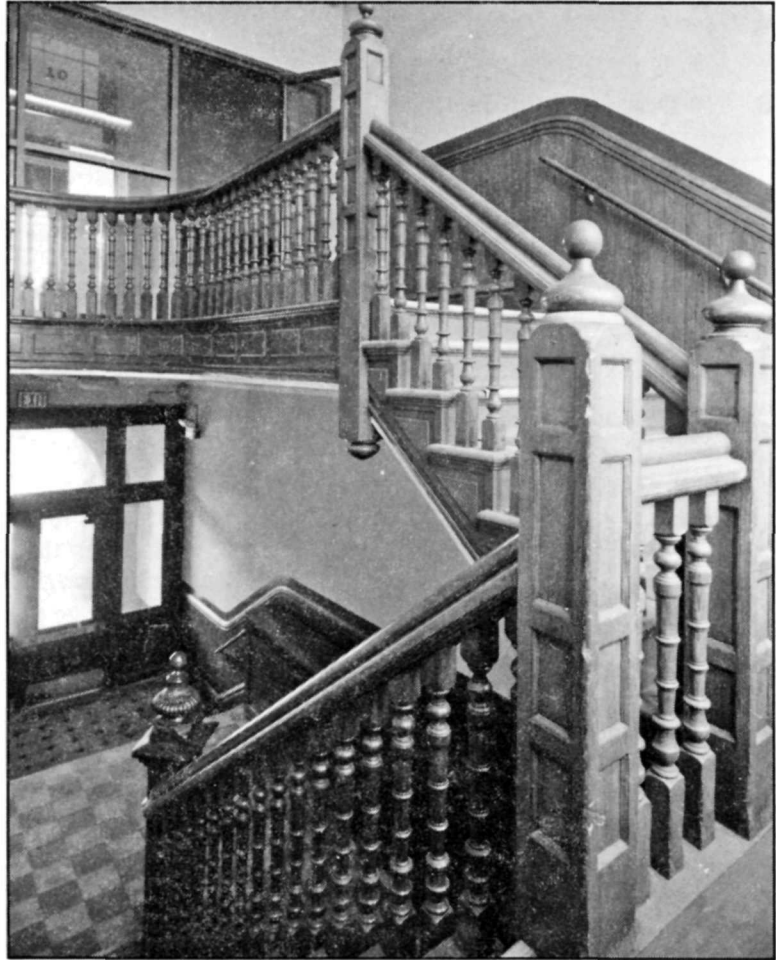


Fig. A56 Masonic Temple, interior, staircase between first and second floors.

pressed-metal ceilings. On the third floor, the Grand Lodge Room walls were painted green with a 2'-high stenciled gold frieze. The Smaller Lodge Room had brown walls with stenciled Masonic emblems. The third-floor ceiling had "beautifully decorated iron panels," since removed; it now has panels between the beams, and scrolled brackets at the walls. The fourth floor has a pressed-metal ceiling.

5. Openings: Most of the interior doors have five rectangular panels. The second-floor doors are topped by large square transom windows with bull's-eye corner blocks. The third-floor doors have no transom windows, while the fourth-floor doors do. Many of the windows have interior panelled shutters.
6. Furniture: The furniture in the Grand Lodge Room was "of massive mahogany upholstered with exquisite silk velvet, and the chairs and pedestals represent three classes of architecture--Ionic, Doric, and Corinthian." In the Smaller Lodge Room there was "quartered oak furniture, upholstered with blue silk mohair plush." All of the furniture has been removed.
7. Mechanical systems:

- a. Heating:  
The building was equipped with a Guerne Hot Water System, evidence of which may be seen in the radiator pipes which run around the Banqueting Hall, as well as other rooms.

- b. Lighting:  
The building was equipped with both gas and electric lighting. In the Grand Lodge Room, "Six chandeliers fitted for five gas burners and four electric lights



Fig. A.57 Masonic Temple, interior, detail of wallpaper in third-floor room.

each are suspended from the ceiling, and on the side walls are brackets for two gas and two electric lights." In the Smaller Lodge Room were "two handsome brass chandeliers fitted for gas and electricity." In the Banqueting Hall were "six four-light brass chandeliers."

- c. Cooking: The original stove, equipped with fifteen gas burners, remains in the kitchen.

D. Site:

1. General setting and orientation: The building faces northeast on 11th Street, running from Green Avenue to 12th Avenue. Green Avenue was not cut through until the 1960s; originally there was an alley on that end of the building.
2. Outbuildings: There was apparently a stable located on the lot next door on 12th Avenue, owned by the Masons, but it has been demolished.



PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- A. Original architectural drawings: Several blueprints of original drawings are located in the building. These include fourteen drawings signed by Windrim (1889); eleven signed by Hersh and Shollar (1925-26); and one of an undated storefront.
- B. Early views:
1. Art Work of Blair County (Chicago: The W. H. Parish Publishing Co., 1893), includes two photographs, one of the Masonic Temple itself, and one of the Opera House Block with the Masonic Temple in the background.
  2. The Altoona Mirror library, Historical Cuts collection, has two relatively unknown photographs of the Masonic Temple. One, ca. 1890, shows the completed 12th Avenue facade and a second, taken shortly thereafter, shows the unaltered storefronts and the tower.
  3. An original line drawing of the building is reproduced in the commemorative program for the dedication of the new Masonic Temple, June 29, 1985.
  4. Charles B. Clark's Semi-Centennial History of Blair County (Altoona: Privately printed, 1896), contains a photograph of the building.
  5. James S. Kasun, 305 Coleridge Ave., Altoona, has a 1940s photograph of the vitrolite facade of the Young Men's Shop, which was located at 1113 Green Ave. from 1942 until 1973. This photograph also shows some original decorative details that have since been removed from the temple.
- C. Interviews: Lloyd Murray, former Worshipful Master of Mountain Lodge No. 281, interview with Alison K. Hoagland, July 6, 1988; interview with K. Edward Lay and Doug Anderson, July 17, 1989.
- D. Bibliography:
1. Primary sources: The archives of Mountain Lodge No. 281 contains several items of interest, including:
    - a. A letter from the Committee on Arrangements to the Worshipful Master, Wardens and Brethrens of Mountain Lodge No. 281, August 20, 1889, describing the cornerstone-laying ceremony.
    - b. Newspapers found in the cornerstone, which the lodge opened when they left the temple.
    - c. "A Fiftieth Anniversary History of the Lodge," in manuscript form, no author.
  2. Secondary sources:

"The Temple Dedicated," Altoona Tribune (May 22, 1890).

Poppeliers, John. "James Hamilton Windrim," seminar paper, University of Pennsylvania, 1962.

\_\_\_\_\_. "The 1867 Philadelphia Masonic Temple Competition," Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians 26 (December 1967): 278-284.

\_\_\_\_\_. "James H. Windrim," in MacMillan Encyclopedia of Architects, Adolf K. Placzek, ed. New York: The Free Press, 1982.

Prepared by Alison K. Hoagland,  
Summer, 1988  
Augmented by Nancy Spiegel,  
Summer, 1989

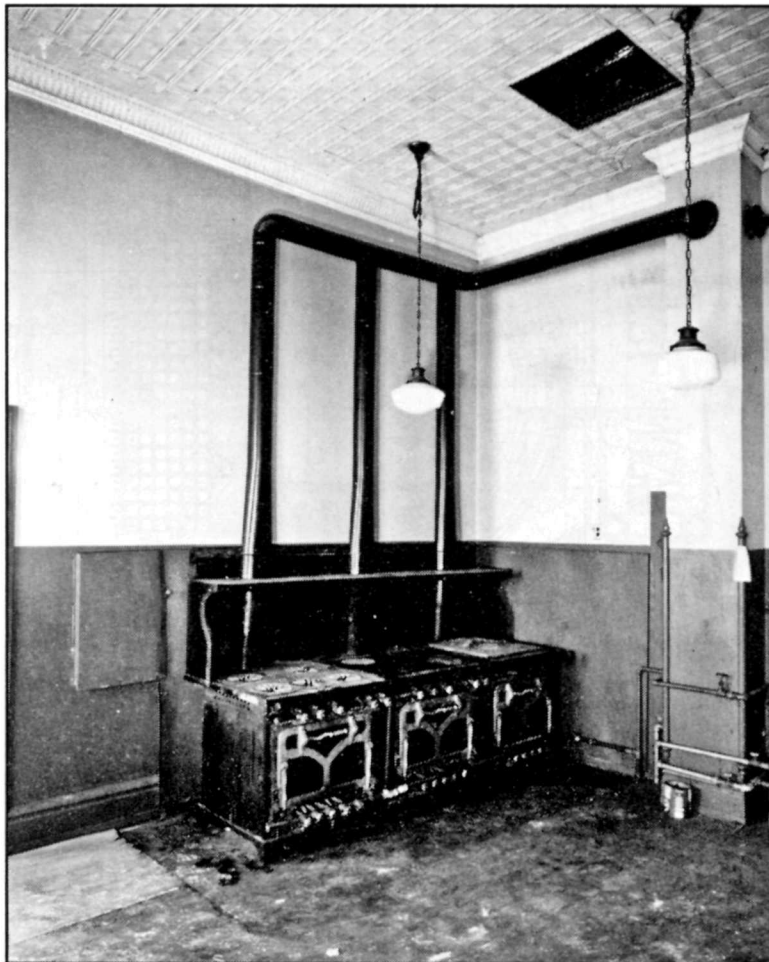
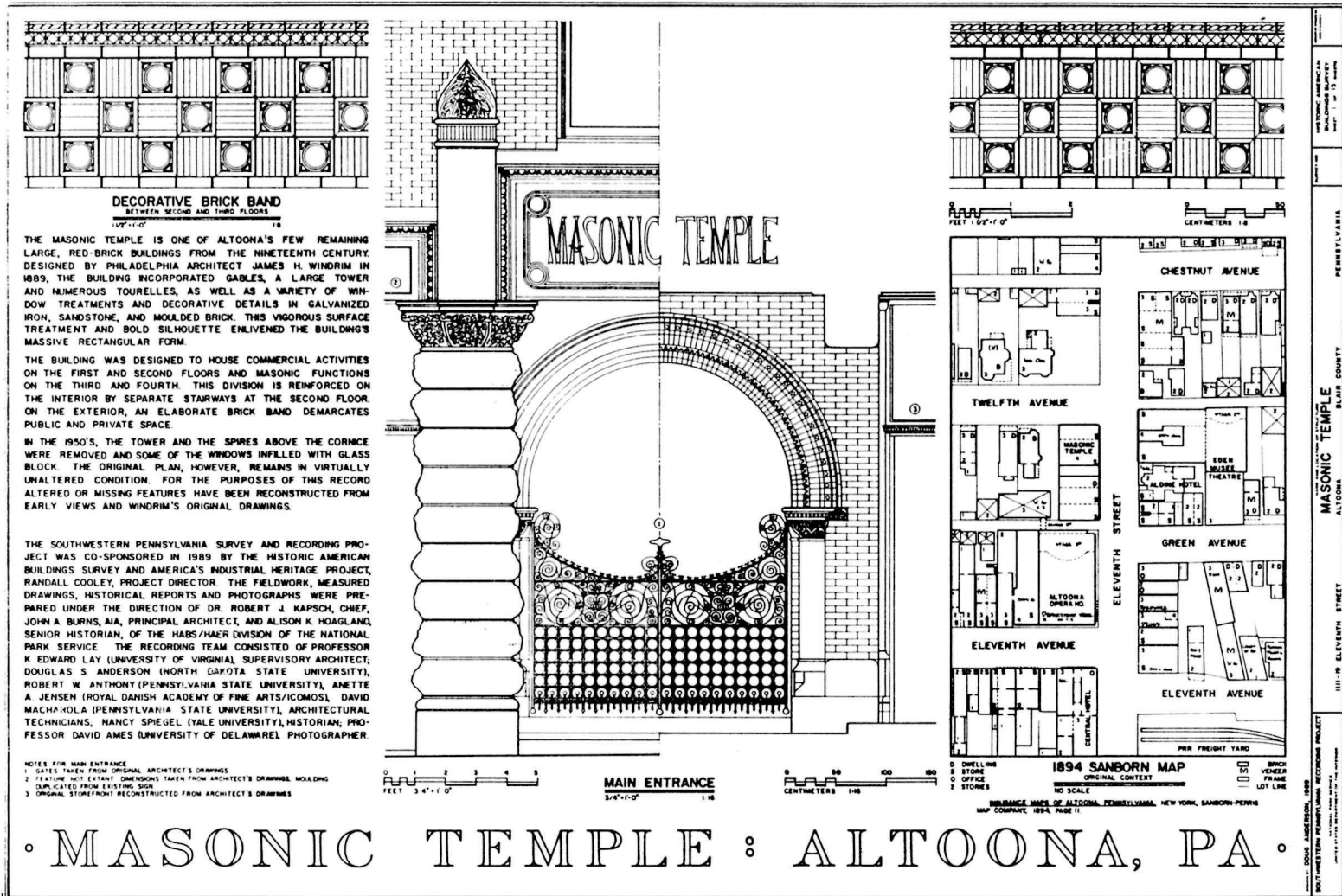


Fig. A.58 Masonic Temple, interior, range in fourth-floor kitchen.



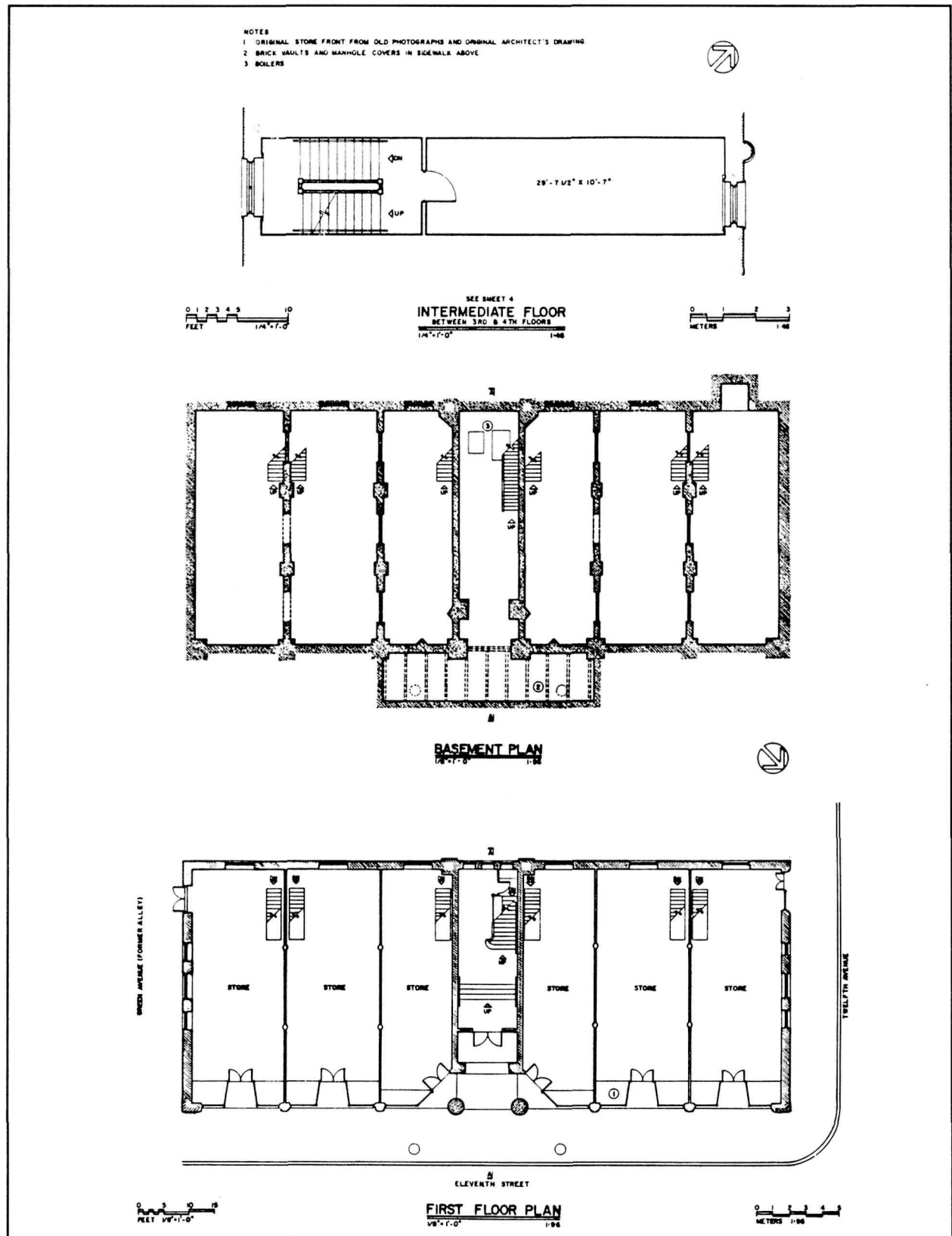
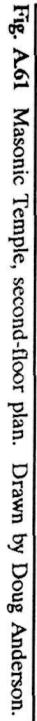
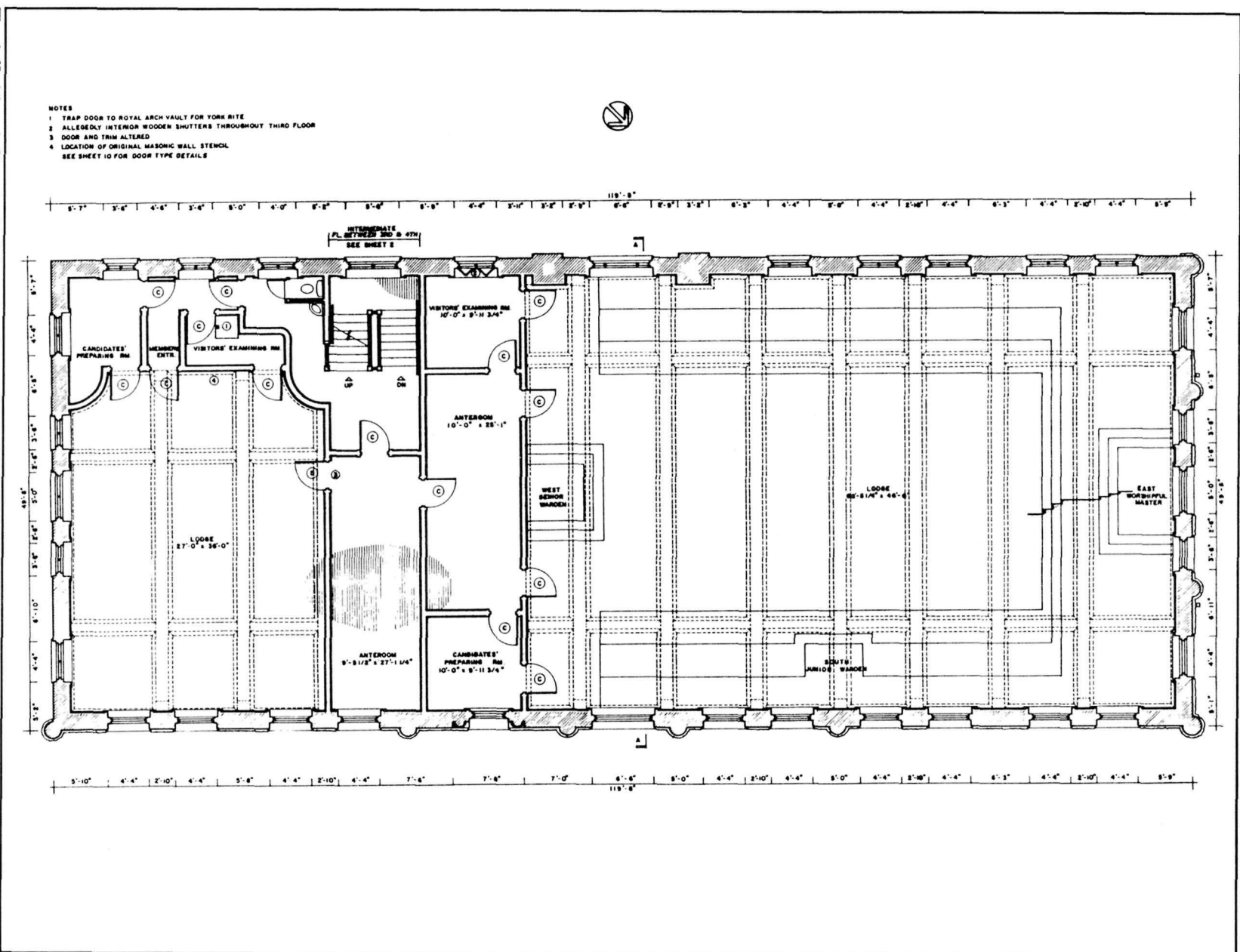


Fig. A.60 Masonic Temple, basement-, first- and intermediate-floor plans. Drawn by David A. Macharola.





**Fig. A62** Masonic Temple, third-floor plan. Drawn by K. Edward Lay.



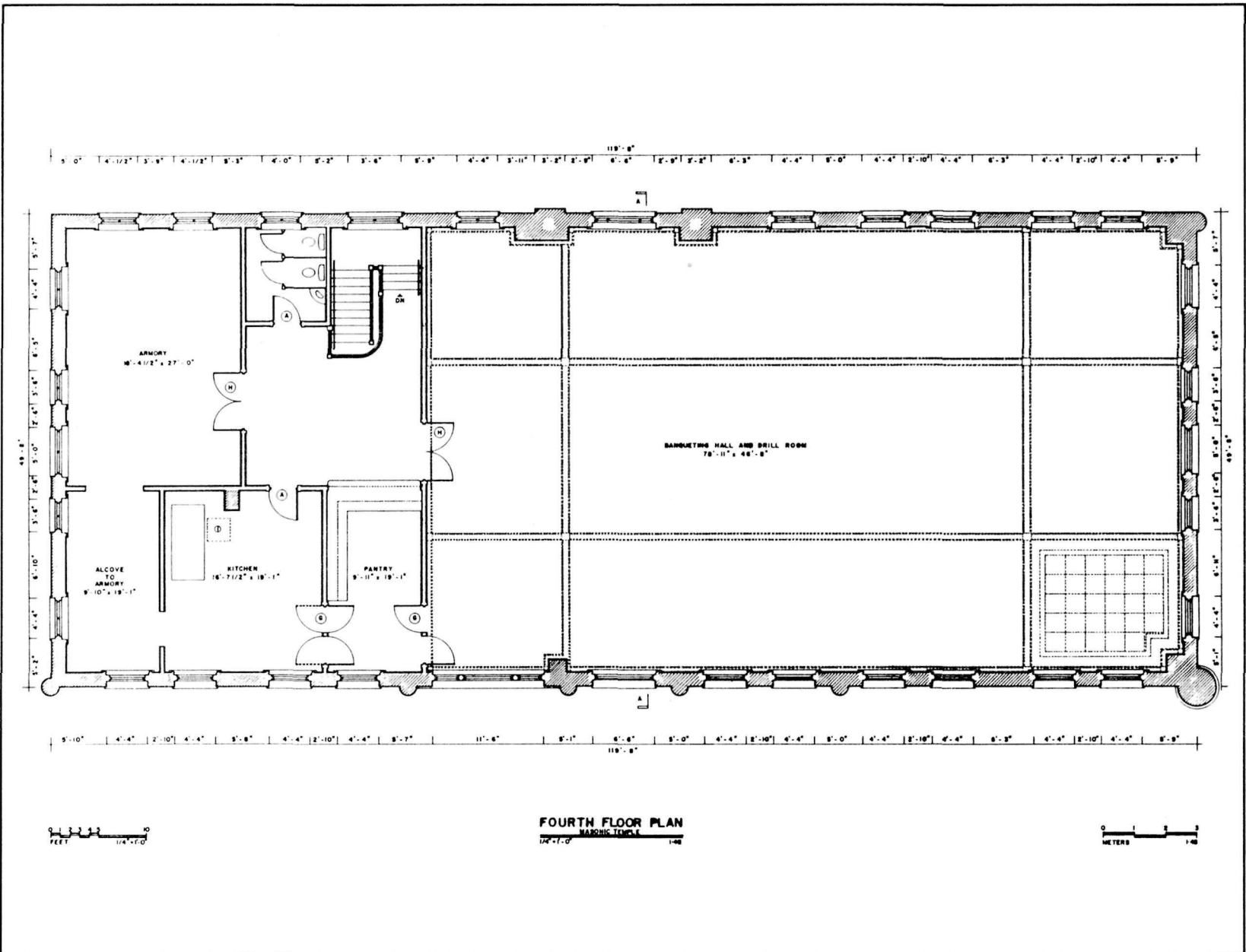
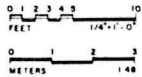


Fig. A-63 Masonic Temple, fourth-floor plan. Drawn by Anette A. Jensen.

## ELEVENTH STREET ELEVATION

1/4" = 1'-0" 1/48



- NOTE
- 1 THE STOREFRONTS ARE RECONSTRUCTED FROM THE ARCHITECT'S DRAWINGS AND EARLY PHOTOGRAPHS
  - 2 THE TOWER HAS BEEN RECONSTRUCTED FROM THE ORIGINAL ARCHITECT'S DRAWINGS SEE SHEET 6
  - 3 SEE BOX BEAM DETAIL ON SHEET 18
  - 4 WINDOWS RECONSTRUCTED FROM THOSE EXISTING



Fig. A-64 Masonic Temple, 11th Street elevation. Drawn by Anette A. Jensen.

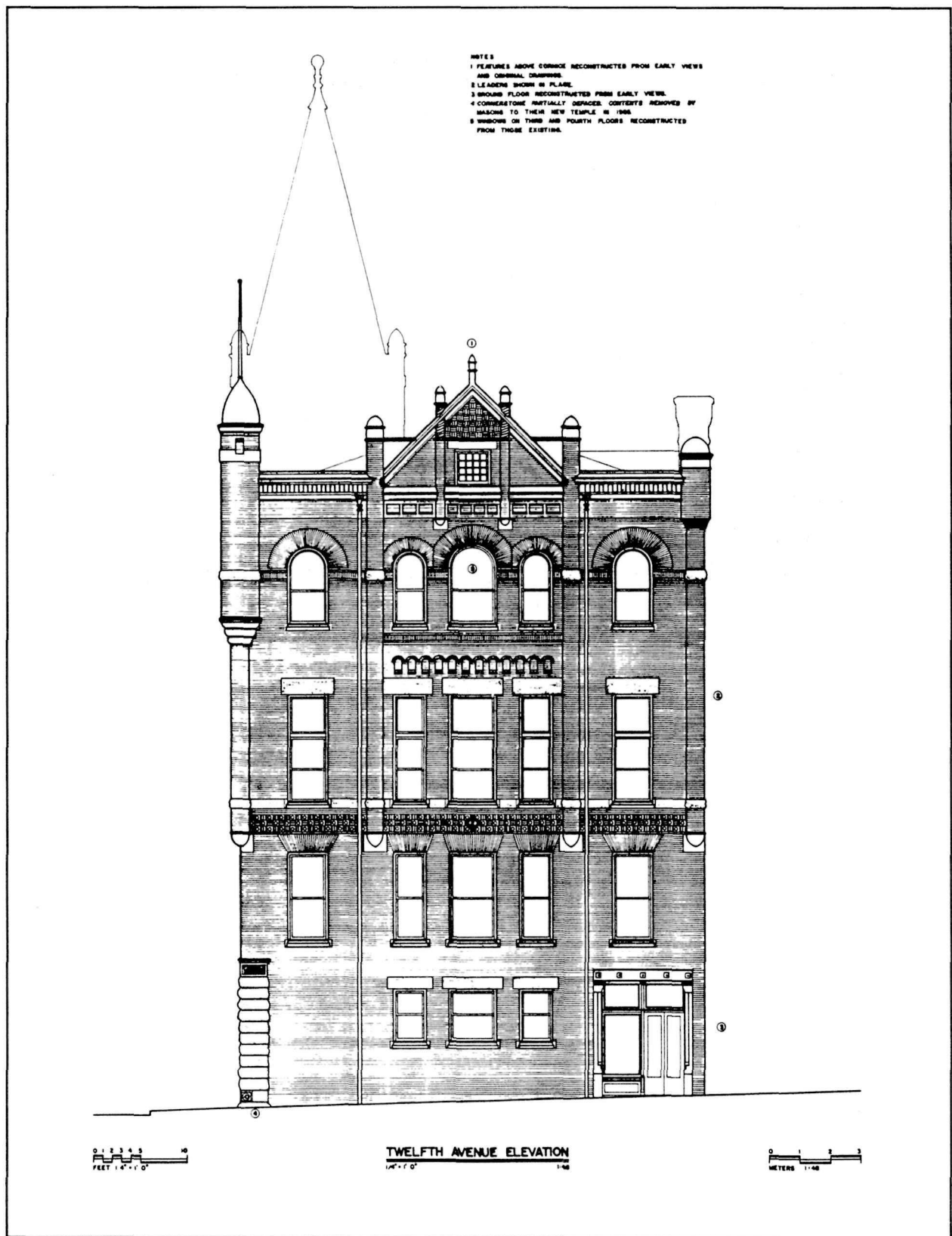


Fig. A.65 Masonic Temple, 12th Avenue elevation. Drawn by Doug Anderson.

**CASANAVE BUILDING**  
HABS No. PA-5519



Fig. A.66 Casanave Building, 11th Street facade.

Location: 1211-15 11th Ave., Altoona, Blair County, Pa.

Present Owner: Frank West, 1019 4th Ave., Altoona, Pa. 16601.

Present Use: A bar is on the southeast side, first floor. The rest of the building is vacant.

Significance: The Casanave Building is a classic and now-rare example of the kind of large, red-brick commercial buildings that dominated the downtown streetscape in the late nineteenth century. Described in 1892 as "one of the largest and most handsome brick business blocks in Altoona," the four-story, rectangular building features a virtually unaltered interior, with a stage in the fourth-floor hall.

## PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

### A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: 1892-94. A history of Blair County published in 1892 noted that the Casanave Building had been "just completed," but tax assessments indicate that



substantial finishing work continued through 1894.<sup>31</sup>

2. Architect: The building has never been attributed to a particular architect, although a likely candidate is Charles M. Robinson, who designed many of the commercial buildings featured in *Illustrated Altoona*, a boosterist history published in 1896. The Casanave Building bears close stylistic resemblance to Robinson's Nicholson Building of 1893, which had comparable proportions and a similarly organized facade featuring arcaded third-floor windows and piers flanking the central bay.
3. Original and subsequent owners: The building was constructed for Germaine Casanave (d. 1922), Altoona's most successful saddle and harness manufacturer, who had his retail leather goods business on the first floor. In ca. 1946, the Casanave estate sold the building to E. Raymond Smith, whose Philadelphia Drug Store had been a longtime tenant on the southeast side of the first floor. Joseph Martino bought the property in 1968, two years after the drug store closed. In 1981 he sold the building to Gary Kimmel who then sold it to Douglas West in 1989.
4. Builder, contractor, suppliers: Unknown.
5. Original plans and construction: The first floor had one store on either side of the main entrance. A ca. 1893 photograph shows the storefronts with plate-glass display windows and recessed entrances. A narrow cornice with pairs of scrolled brackets was directly above the windows, visually separating the first-floor commercial space from the rest of the building. Suites of offices were located on the second and third floors. The fourth floor consisted of a large, open hall equipped with a stage on the 13th Avenue end. The building was also topped by a pediment, since removed, which read "CASANAVE BLOCK." Except for the stores on the first floor, the original plan remains intact.
6. Alterations and additions: In 1915, the original one-story, frame warehouse to the rear of the building was replaced by a two-story, L-shaped brick structure with a flat roof. This building housed a second Casanave family enterprise, the Altoona Drug and Chemical Company, which was in business from 1915-32.

The Philadelphia Drug Store was founded on the southeast side of the Casanave Building in 1911. In 1946-48, it expanded into the space formerly occupied by Casanave's saddlery, taking over the entire first floor. A new storefront, finished in jade green vitrolite trimmed in black, was constructed under the supervision of contractor George Bott. On the interior, the pharmacy was separated from the other departments and moved to the northeast side of the building; a through-passage was cut to connect them.

A 1948 article described the interior of the drug store:

Store fixtures are trimmed in blond maple with prima verra trim, backed with mirrors giving a brilliance to all items on display. The display cases are in matching wood and the intervening wall space is panelled and mirrored. The walls are finished in jade green matching the color of the store front, and are

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<sup>31</sup>This comment, and the observation cited in the statement of significance, can be found in Samuel T. Wiley and W. Scott Garner's *Biographical and Portrait Cyclopaedia of Blair County, Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia: Gresham Publishing Co., 1892), 263. See also, tax assessments for Altoona's First Ward, 1891-94, Blair County Courthouse, Hollidaysburg, Pa.

trimmed in white, with decorative wall brackets at the ceiling junctures. The floor is finished in permanent terrazzo, with black trim.

The rear addition was turned into two large stock rooms for the drug store. The first floor served as a receiving room, while the second floor was used for maintaining reserve stocks. (Philadelphia Drug Store's, grand re-opening announcement, Altoona Mirror [April 7, 1948])

In ca. 1949 the drug store built a two-story addition on its 13th Avenue end, which now houses the offices of the American Automobile Association of Blair County. The building retains one clue to previous use: the main entrance at the corner of 11th Street and 13th Avenue has an approach step with a mortar and pestle in multi-colored terrazzo.

In the late 1960s, the southeast side of the first floor was converted into a bar-lounge. The second- and third-floor offices were turned into individual sleeping rooms, but none of the interior walls were altered. Some of these rooms have dropped ceilings with fluorescent lighting and wall-to-wall carpeting. The fourth floor was refloored to accommodate a private gymnasium; a full boxing rink remains in the building.

The Tudor-style storefront and new entrance doors were installed in the early 1980s. The building's original pediment was removed sometime after 1946.

#### B. Historical Context:

Born in southwest France, Germaine Casanave followed his brother Francis D. Casanave, a machinist, to Altoona in 1870. Francis D. was promoted to master mechanic of the PRR's local shops and transferred to Fort Wayne, Indiana, where he advanced to superintendent of motive power. Later, he transferred back to Altoona as general superintendent of motive power, and resided in the PRR's Italianate double house on 11th Avenue.<sup>32</sup>

Germaine Casanave remained in Altoona, establishing the largest saddlery in town, first at 1328 11th Ave., and after 1898, in his own building. He was an influential, behind-the-scenes figure in local politics, for many years reserving the top floor of the Casanave Building for private political meetings and discussion.<sup>33</sup> Casanave lived in the prestigious residential neighborhood directly behind his shop; in addition to his home at 1105 13th Ave., he owned a frame double house at No. 1103, and a brick-veneered double house at Nos. 1107-09.

The Philadelphia Drug Store was founded as the Philadelphia Medicine Company by William Coleman Taylor in 1895. The name was changed to the former when E. Raymond Smith and Richard Jones purchased full interest in the company in 1911. Not coincidentally, Jones was also a founding partner in the Casanaves' Altoona Drug and Chemical Company. The drug store boasted one of the first motorized delivery services in Altoona, instituted in 1928, and the largest inventory of pharmaceuticals between Pittsburgh and Philadelphia. Branch stores were established at 2392 Broad Ave. and 729 4th Ave. in 1932. In 1966, the locally popular drug store--a landmark on 11th Avenue--closed its doors for good.

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<sup>32</sup>"The French," Altoona Tribune (January 16, 1916), sec., 2, 12.

<sup>33</sup>Jack Casanave, telephone interview by Nancy Spiegel, Altoona, Pa., July 6, 1989.

Over the years, the building has housed such diverse tenants as attorneys, a dance school, and a dental lab. After the final departure of the PRR in the 1960s, the demand for office space in Altoona fell dramatically. In the late 1960s, Joseph Martino, a professional boxer, converted the second- and third-floor offices into a boarding house, and transformed the fourth-floor meeting hall into his private gymnasium. Two new businesses were established on the first floor: a bar-lounge, which continues to operate at No. 1211, and the Greyhound bus station, which remained at No. 1213 until Altoona's new transportation center opened in the 1980s. The upper three stories have been vacant since they were damaged in a recent fire.

## PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

### A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: The flat facade of the Casanave Building is enlivened by the varying textures of patterned brickwork, molded brick panels, and rusticated stone accents around the windows.
2. Condition of fabric: Good-fair. The building is quite sound despite some recent water and fire damage.

### B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: The four-story, rectangular brick structure measures approximately 69' (nine bays on 11th Avenue) x 60' (five bays along the alley and 13th Avenue ends). The rear addition measures approximately 42' x 32'.
2. Foundations: Not visible.
3. Walls: Red brick in common bond. The second, third and fourth stories are arranged in nine bays; the center bay is separated from the others by full-height, brick piers. Molded, rectangular brick panels are inset in the spandrels of the central bay.
4. Structural system: The building has brick bearing walls and wood and steel joists.
5. Chimneys: Pairs of interior chimneys project through the roof on the northwest and southeast facades. The chimneys are rectangular in section and laid in common bond.
6. Openings:
  - a. Doorways and doors: The entrance to the upper floors has a glass transom window with "1211-13" stencilled in gold and black. A back entrance on the alley facade has been bricked up.
  - b. Windows: On the 11th Avenue facade, the first-floor windows have been replaced by modern storefronts; the windows on the second and third floors have flat arches and one-over-one-light, double-hung sash; the fourth-floor windows are arcaded, with round-arched sash. On the alley facade, the three first-floor windows have been bricked up; those on the second, third and fourth floors have one-over-one-light, double-hung sash. All of the windows on the facade have rusticated, stone lintels and sills, while those on the alley facade have segmental brick arches. Many of the windows are broken; some of these

have been boarded up.

7. Roof:

- a. Shape: The low-pitched hipped roof is covered with green composition roofing. The rear building has a flat roof covered with built-up roofing.
- b. Cornice, eaves: The pressed-metal cornice has a foliated frieze.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans:

- a. Basement: An unfinished basement with rough-cut, semi-coursed, stone walls, a concrete floor, and exposed ceiling framing, extends the length and width of the building.
- b. First: The original plan has been obscured by recent renovations.
- c. Second: There is a center hall, running longitudinally, lit with one window on the alley end. Two shorter, transverse corridors open off the main hall and extend back to the rear wall of the building on either side of the central stairwell. Offices originally opened off of these halls; there were five along the front of the building, two along the alley end, and one on the 13th Avenue end.
- d. Third: The back stair opens directly into what appears to have been a waiting room. The waiting room opens onto an irregularly shaped, open floor with three offices along the front of the building and two storage rooms in the rear.
- e. Fourth: The fourth floor consists of a large, open hall with a stage on the 13th Avenue side.

2. Stairways: The stairway between the first and second floors is located opposite the entrance in a narrow stair passage. Its landing is along the rear wall. This stairway has a prominent newel post, turned balusters and wood treads. The stairway to the upper floors is located in the southwest corner of the building and raises along the rear wall.

3. Flooring: Narrow pine boards are used throughout the building. The entrance lobby is covered with old linoleum.

4. Wall and ceiling finish: The first-floor hall, stairway, and second-floor hall have wainscots of vertical beaded boards, decorative wood baseboards, and pressed-metal ceilings. On the third floor, the walls and ceiling are plaster on lath. The fourth floor has a new ceiling and exposed brick walls.

5. Openings:

- a. Doorways and doors: The entrance hall has a set of inner double doors with a transom and sidelights. On all floors, the interior doors have five rectangular panels with chamfered edges. The doorways on the second and third floors have rectangular glass transom windows and molded surrounds with bull's-eye corner blocks. The stage is essentially an interior wall with a large, rectangular

opening in the center. That opening is finished with a molded surround and bull's-eye corner blocks.

- b. Windows: The windows have the same molded surrounds and bull's-eye corner blocks as the doors and the stage.

6. Mechanical systems:

- a. Heating: Steam.
- b. Lighting: Original metal lighting fixtures are in place throughout the building.

- D. Site: The building stands at the head of Chestnut Avenue, facing northeast on 11th Street. Before urban renewal projects of the late 1940s-60s levelled several of the area's major commercial and ecclesiastical buildings for parking lots, this was regarded as the busiest intersection in Altoona.

### PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- A. Original architectural drawings: None located.

B. Early views:

1. Art Work of Blair County (Chicago: The W. H. Parish Publishing Company, 1893), contains a photograph of the building in its original, unaltered state.
2. A 1946 file photograph in the Altoona Mirror library shows the building with its original pediment. The first U.S. Post Office, at the northeast corner of 11th Street and Chestnut Avenue, is under demolition in the foreground.
3. A photograph of the modernized Philadelphia Drug Store facade, together with an interior view of the store's new prescription department, appear in the Altoona Mirror, April 7, 1948.

C. Interviews:

Jack Casanave, grandson of Germaine Casanave, telephone interview by Nancy Spiegel, Altoona, Pa., July 6, 1989.

Frank West, father of the current owner, interviews by Nancy Spiegel, Altoona, Pa., summer 1989.

D. Bibliography:

1. Primary sources:

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Building Record, Deed Books and Tax Assessments, Blair County Courthouse, Hollidaysburg, Pa.



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"Philadelphia Drug Store Plans Opening." Altoona Mirror (April 7 1948).

2. Secondary sources:

Clark, Charles B. Illustrated Altoona. Altoona: Privately printed, 1896.

"Philadelphia Drug Store Long Established," Altoona Mirror (June 13, 1939).

"This is My Birthday--Germaine Casanave," Altoona Mirror (April 23, 1920).

Untitled history of the Philadelphia Drug Store, typescript, March 8, 1948.

Wiley, Samuel T. and W. Scott Garner. Biographical and Portrait Cyclopedia of Blair County, Pennsylvania. Philadelphia: Gresham Publishing Co., 1892.

**ALTOONA CITY HALL**  
HABS No. PA-5520



**Fig. A.67** Altoona City Hall, 12th Street and 13th Avenue.

Location: Northwest corner of 12th Street and 13th Avenue, Altoona, Blair County, Pa.

Present Owner: City of Altoona.

Present Use: The multi-functional building houses city administrative offices, council chambers, and Altoona's police department and prison.

Significance: For a brief period, from 1918 to 1921, Altoona adopted a city manager form of government, which accomplished a great deal in a short time. In addition to upgrading the public parks system and initiating new highways projects, the city manager also streamlined municipal government, establishing a more efficient and equitable system for collecting taxes. Although construction of the proposed municipal building did not take place under the brief reform administration, the Beaux Arts-style city hall of 1925-27, a design by Frederic Shollar and Frank Hersh of Altoona, nonetheless stands as symbol of the reformers' aspirations and the city's progress in the boom decade of the 1920s.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: 1925-27. Ground was broken June 22, 1925, and the cornerstone was

laid without ceremony November 20, 1925. The building officially opened on Armistice Day--November 11, 1927.

2. Architect: The local architectural firm of Hersh and Shollar won an open competition for the design.

Frederic James Shollar (1873-1960) first joined with Frank A. Hersh (1874-1949) in 1900, opening offices in the Altoona Trust Building in 1902 or 1903. Their partnership eventually dissolved, for in 1917 Hersh and Shollar maintained offices in the Central Trust Building while Shollar remained in the Altoona Trust Building. By 1925 Shollar and Hersh were reunited. This partnership lasted until the 1930s, when the two men again separated. During their early years together, (ca. 1902-15) the firm was known as Shollar and Hersh; when the architects reunited (ca. 1925-30s), they reversed the names and were known as Hersh and Shollar. Despite the disjunctures in their long partnership, Shollar and Hersh were responsible for designing many of Altoona's most significant institutional and commercial buildings.

Both men were also active in the community. Shollar, a Socialist, ran unsuccessfully for lieutenant governor of Pennsylvania in 1914. He helped establish the City Planning Commission of Altoona and for six years served as its chairman. He was also a member of the chamber of commerce and the American Institute of Architects (A.I.A.). Hersh was a member of the A.I.A., the Masons, and the Jaffa Temple. (Shollar obituary, Altoona Mirror [January 16, 1960]; Hersh obituary, Altoona Mirror [October 8, 1949]; and "Frederic James Shollar" in Davis, 127-28.)

3. Original and subsequent owners: On November 2, 1869, John Wright sold a corner lot measuring 75' x 120' to the Vigilant Fire Company for \$1,075. (Deed Book X/309) The City of Altoona purchased the site in 1872, establishing the offices of city government on the second floor of the Vigilant building. The volunteer fire department continued to operate independently until 1895, when the city took over its operation on a professional basis.

4. Builder, contractor, suppliers:

Contractor: Columbia Construction Company, Inc., an Altoona firm with offices in the Altoona Trust Building, won the contract with a bid of \$246,914. In addition to building mercantile structures in Central Pennsylvania and elsewhere, Columbia Construction did considerable work for the Pennsylvania Railroad Company. Projects of note include the construction of railroad icing stations in Huntingdon, Pa., and Wilmington, N.C., as well as several towers and boiler houses. (Altoona Mirror [March 5, 1925].)

Excavation: E. L. Grannas, 1911 5th St.

Cut stone: McGinley Cut Stone, Union Avenue.

Brick: Altoona Brick Company, 1115 11th St.

Lumber: J. C. Orr and Sons, 5th Street and 7th Avenue.

Sand and Plaster: Blair Building Material Co., 1710 Margaret Ave.

Structural steel: Bethlehem Fabricating Co.

Roof: Union Roofing Co., 9th Avenue.

Painting: H. L. Wilson, Chestnut Avenue and 11th Street.

Hardware: W. I. Daugherty and Son, 1108 11th St.

Elevators: Otis Elevator of Harrisburg received \$12,640 for two elevators.

Heating System: Installed by Mulch Brothers of Hollidaysburg, Pa.

Plumbing fixtures: Supplied by Standard Sanitary Manufacturing Co., 916 11th Ave., and Standard Supply and Equipment Co.

Plumbing installation: F. S. Tierney, 809 7th St.

Electrical fixtures: Furnished by J. E. Spence, 1312 12th Ave. and Altoona Electrical Supply, 1120 11th Ave.

Furnishings: H. W. McCartney 1107 11th Ave., had a contract for filing cabinets, steel desks, and safes totalling \$18,072.80; William F. Gable Co. supplied 285 office chairs for \$5,217.25.

Cells: Van Doren Iron Works, Cleveland, Ohio, won a contract for \$16,347.

(Compiled from numerous articles in New City Hall clippings files, Altoona Mirror library.)

5. Original plans and construction: Altoona's new city hall incorporated several branches of municipal government under one roof, as had the old building. The new structure's plan, however, also reflected the progressive era's concerns with centrality, efficiency, and streamlined government. Shollar and Hersh located the offices of the mayor, city treasurer, and water department on the first floor to afford the public easy and direct access. The patrol room, located at ground level on the alley side, was equipped with a private elevator for discreetly transporting people to the third-floor holding cells. The second floor had the offices of the city engineer, assessor, and highways department. The third floor contained the courts, council chambers, police department, and a public auditorium.

On the exterior, entrances on both the street and avenue sides reinforced the ideal of government's accessibility to the people. A marquee suspended over the 13th Avenue entrance appears in early photographs and postcard views, but it is not clear whether this was original or a very early addition. The cost of the building was \$249,950.

6. Alterations and additions: While the exterior of the building remains virtually unaltered, one change is particularly worthy of note--the street facades have been altered by the application of green metal panels over the spandrels between the second and third floors; originally, these spandrels were fitted with dark metal panels with bas-relief designs and egg-and-dart molded borders. In addition, some of the first-floor windows have been filled with glass block within the last ten years. On the interior, most of the transom windows throughout the building have been blocked up, and drop ceilings have been installed. The original wicket surrounding the treasurer's office has been replaced with more contemporary office furniture.

#### B. Historical Context:

The first building on this site was erected for the Vigilant Steam Fire Engine Company in 1870, two years after Altoona was chartered as a city. Funds for construction were raised through private subscriptions and contributions from members of the company. Benjamin F. Rose, president of Vigilant, is credited with designing the structure; D. K. Ramey supplied the lumber; John Robinson laid the brick; and Joseph Watson cut the foundation stone.<sup>34</sup> The engine house's 75' corner tower, which served as a hose lookout, was a landmark on the late nineteenth-century skyline. When the building was razed in 1925 to make way for the city hall, the old clock, a post-1870s addition, and the bell, which for years sounded the general fire

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<sup>34</sup>"History of the City Hall in Altoona," [typescript of dedication speech], November 11, 1927, 2-4. Altoona Mirror library.

alarm, were donated to the Blair County Historical Society, where they remain today.

The three-story, brick engine house evolved over the years into the city's first all-purpose municipal building. Although Altoona's founding mayor and council were elected in 1868, there were apparently no immediate plans to construct a building specifically to house the offices of local government. Finally, after a year of rigorous negotiations, city officials purchased the Vigilant Building in 1872, establishing the offices of city government on the second floor. The fire company continued to occupy a portion of the first floor until 1895, when the city took over the entire building.

Even with the space vacated by the volunteer fire department, Altoona's administrative offices remained overcrowded. It was not until the building was enlarged in 1897-98 at a cost of \$9,400 that the offices of the city treasurer, city clerk, and water department were located there. Previously these various offices had been scattered throughout the downtown area. Later additions enlarged the 12th Avenue side in 1908 and the western side in 1914.<sup>35</sup>

Construction of the new city hall commenced with a ground-breaking ceremony on June 22, 1925, and the building was occupied on November 11, 1927. The councilmen's plans underwent several modifications after Altoona's voters flatly rejected a \$1 million loan scheme to finance the construction; commissioner W. M. C. Craine countered with a successful proposal for a \$300,000 structure. Working within the established financial constraints, Shollar and Hersh designed Altoona's new city hall in the monumental, Beaux Arts style befitting a civic building of the progressive era. However, to cut expenses, they decided to continue incorporating the various municipal functions under one roof, in contrast with the nationwide trend toward more specialized structures for each branch of local government. To this day, the police department, jail, courts, city treasurer, and mayor share the building. Moreover, the consolidation and streamlining of city government in the 1920s did not necessarily eliminate the interdependent relationship that sometimes existed between the railroad and city. Older employees in the office of the city engineer remember a time when Conrail engineers would alternately take a year or two off from their own work to run the city engineer's office.<sup>36</sup>

## PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

### A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: The monumental, Beaux Arts-style exterior, which features symmetrical limestone and brick facades and a projecting central pavilion, was emphasized at the expense of the interior, which is rather plain.
2. Condition of fabric: Very good.

### B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: The rectangular, three-story building measures 76' x 107' x 60' to the top of the parapet wall on the roof.

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<sup>35</sup>"New City Hall Occupied November 11, 1927," 4, typescript, Altoona Mirror clippings file.

<sup>36</sup>Michael Kinser, city engineer, interviews by Nancy Spiegel, June 28, 1989 and August 2, 1989, Altoona, Pa.



2. Foundations: Rockport gray granite.
3. Walls: The walls are clad with rusticated Indiana limestone at the first floor and buff brick laid in Flemish bond at the second and third stories. The central pavilion, which projects slightly, has four Doric columns in antis at the second and third stories. A terra cotta frieze above the columns reads "ALTOONA CITY HALL" in incised letters.
4. Structural systems, framing: Steel frame with interior walls of brick and gypsum block. The roof is framed with a steel-truss system.
5. Openings:
  - a. Doorways and doors: The main (12th Street) entrance has an elliptically arched doorway with a transom and sidelights. The original double doors have been replaced. The 13th Avenue entrance has a plain, rectangular doorway with a rectangular transom window above.
  - b. Windows: Two-part windows with double-hung sash and paired square transoms above on the street facades; these measure 6'-4" while the smaller windows on the north and west sides measure 4'-8".
6. Roof:
  - a. Shape: Rectangular, low-hipped roof.
  - b. Cornice: The molded terra cotta cornice is surmounted by a brick parapet wall containing a plaque which reads "ERECTED MCMXXV."

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans:
  - a. First: Two wide corridors--one leading from each of the two main entrances--intersect in the middle of the first floor. The offices of the city treasurer, water department, and mayor's office are here. The floor-to-ceiling height is 15'.
  - b. Second: A mezzanine section leading from the second-floor corridor houses the offices of the city electrician, and employees' lunchrooms. The floor-to-ceiling height is 13'-3".
  - c. Third: The courts, city council chambers, public auditorium, and police department are located here. The floor-to-ceiling height is 14'-5".
2. Stairways: Located opposite the 12th Street entrance, the main staircase has a steel frame, wrought-iron balusters, and marble treads.
3. Flooring: Tile throughout.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: The entrance vestibule has marble baseboards. The public corridors on all three floors have marble baseboards, Caen stone finish on the walls, and cast-plaster cornices.

5. Openings:
    - a. Doorways and doors: All of the doors are mahogany with architrave moldings; most have been painted black.
    - b. Skylights: The roof has seven skylights--two lighting the stairway and third floor landing, two lighting the council chambers, and three over the police department offices.
  6. Mechanical systems:
    - a. Heating: Steam.
    - b. Lighting: Electric.
- D. Site:
1. General setting and orientation: City hall stands in isolation, with streets to the south and east, and an alley on the north side. A parking lot for city vehicles is located to the west of the building.
  2. Outbuildings: A two-story, brick city hall annex is located across the alley, on the corner of 12th Street and 14th Avenue.

### PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- A. Original architectural drawings: The office of the city engineer has a complete set of original blueprint drawings (elevations, plans, sections, and details, etc.) minus the detail sheet showing the bas-relief spandrels. The sheets were drawn by Gerald Shollar, Frederic Shollar's son, and dated May 5, 1925.
- B. Early views:
1. Altoona Charter Centennial, 1868-1968 (Altoona: Altoona Charter Committee, 1968), 62, photograph of the building before the bas-relief spandrels were either covered or removed.
  2. A proposed design that was never built is illustrated in "Frieling's Plan for City Hall," Altoona Mirror clippings file, date obscured [1924]. The design submitted by architect Walter Frieling of Altoona called for a three-story Beaux Arts-style building with paired, round-arched entrances on both the street and avenue sides. His proposal also eliminated approach steps, which could be difficult to ascend in the winter months.
- C. Interview: Michael Kinser, city engineer, interviews by Nancy Spiegel, June 28, 1989, and August 2, 1989, Altoona, Pa.
- D. Bibliography:
1. Primary sources: Important items from the Altoona Mirror library's New City Hall clippings file include:

"Bids are Open on New City Hall," (June 7, 1925).

"Columbia Co. to Build City Hall," (July 19, 1925).

"Lay Cornerstone of New City Hall," (November 20, 1925.)

"New City Hall is Looming Up," (December 11, 1926).

"New City Hall to be Fine Structure," (February 14, 1925).

"Seal to Ornament New City Hall," (August 12, 1925).

"Utility Keynote in New City Hall," (November 11, 1926).

Altoona, Pennsylvania. New York: Sanborn Map and Publishing Co., Ltd., 1888.

Insurance Maps of Altoona, Pennsylvania. New York: Sanborn-Perris Co., 1894.

Insurance Maps of Altoona, Blair County, Pennsylvania. New York: Sanborn Map Co., 1909.

Insurance Maps of Altoona...Pennsylvania. New York: Sanborn Map Co., 1932.

2. Secondary sources:

"History of the City Hall in Altoona," [typescript of dedication speech], November 11, 1927. Altoona Mirror library.

Lebovich, William L. America's City Halls. Washington, D.C.: The Preservation Press, 1984.

**FIRST METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH**  
HABS No. PA-5521

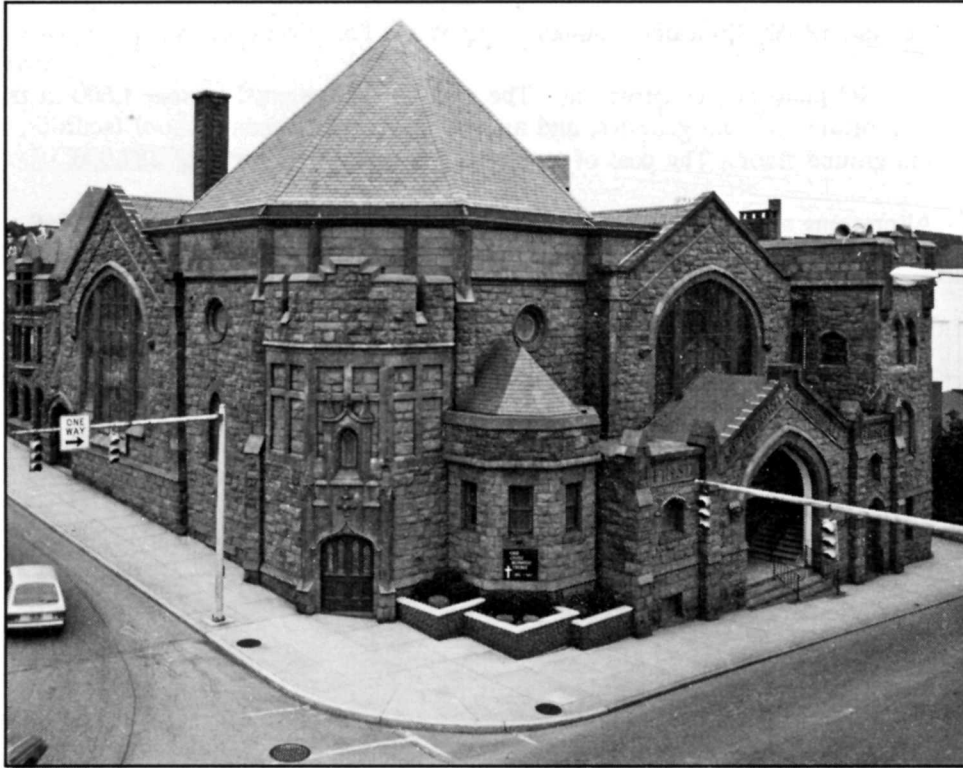


Fig. A.68 First Methodist Episcopal Church, 1208 13th St.

Location: 1208 13th St. (northeast corner of 13th Street and 12th Avenue), Altoona, Blair County, Pa.

Present Owner: First Methodist Episcopal Church.

Present Use: Church.

Significance: Built of rough-faced Hummelstown brownstone with smooth-faced brownstone accents, the First Methodist Episcopal Church and its adjoining rectory were designed by M. R. Brown of New York City in 1905. The well-preserved building boasts more than seventy memorial windows and one of the largest congregations in the city.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: 1905-07. The cornerstone was laid September 24, 1905. The building was dedicated April 27, 1907.
2. Architect: M. R. Brown of New York City.
3. Original and subsequent owners: In 1858, John Wright, a Methodist, "donated" a

desirable 100' x 120' corner lot to the trustees of the First Methodist Episcopal Church for \$100. (Deed Book K/364)

4. Builder: P. W. Finn of Altoona.
5. Original plans and construction: The church was designed to seat 1,600 in the main auditorium and two galleries, and another 800 in its Sunday school facilities, located on the ground floor. The cost of structure and furnishings totalled \$81,000.
6. Alterations and additions: The 115'-high steel steeple was removed in 1940, due to leaks it developed when struck by lightning in 1936, and at one time, other smaller spires rose above the cornice line. In 1949 a new chandelier was installed in the center of the auditorium, replacing the one that fell to the floor in 1947.

In 1963, the church built a one-story brick wing next door on 12th Avenue, replacing the landmark Baltzell Mansion, which had been used as a church house since 1927. The mansion was designed by Charles M. Robinson in 1889, and purchased by the church in 1910. In addition, the church's original terra cotta roof was recently resingled with slate.

B. Historical Context:

The congregation of the First Methodist Episcopal Church was organized in 1851, with a membership of thirty-seven. Led by the Reverend John H. Ryland, who began his work in Altoona in 1853, the congregation erected its first church and rectory at the northeast corner of 12th Avenue and 13th Street in 1854. This first church was a two-story, Gothic Revival-style building constructed of red brick, the building material of choice for five other downtown churches. A detached, frame parsonage stood to the east of the church.

In 1905-07, the congregation replaced its old building with a magnificent brownstone church and attached rectory designed by M. R. Brown of New York. Homer C. Knox had this to say of the building shortly after its completion: "In the

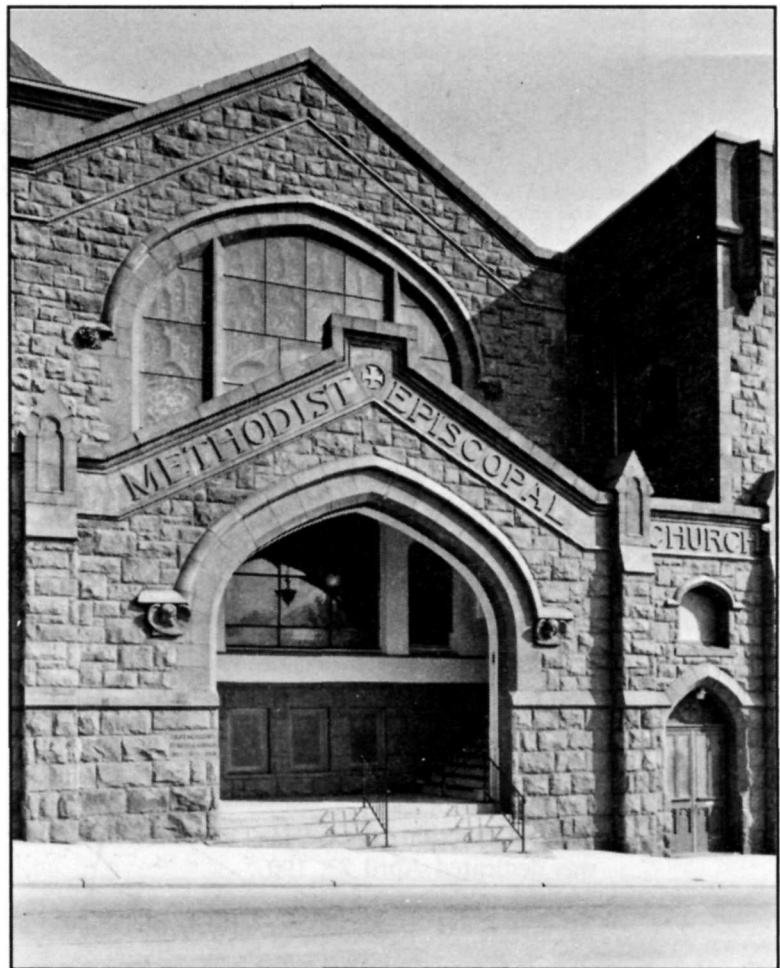


Fig. A.69 First Methodist Episcopal Church, 1208 13th St., detail of 12th Avenue facade.



estimation of the Master, a great Sunday school and Church does not consist of a beautiful edifice with brownstone walls, artistically frescoed: not in art glass windows: not in rich velvet carpeting, nor yet in its commodious appointments but in the spirituality of its members."<sup>37</sup> A parsonage, in the same style and materials as the church, is attached to the church on 13th Street.

## PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

### A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: The church is particularly striking in its massing; large and low, it seems to hug the hill on which it sits.
2. Condition of fabric: Very good. Some of the smaller pieces of carved brownstone ornament have deteriorated.

### B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: The rectangular building measures approximately 100' (12th Avenue) x 120' (13th Street).
2. Foundations: Not visible.
3. Walls: The church has rough-faced, random-coursed, ashlar brownstone walls, with smooth brownstone used for trim and accents. The cornerstone, which reads "First Methodist Episcopal Church 1853-1871-1905," was a gift of the Hummelstown Brownstone Company of Pennsylvania.
4. Structural systems: Steel and reinforced-concrete frame.
5. Openings:
  - a. Doorways and doors: The 12th Avenue entrance is recessed behind a Tudor-arched opening. Directly to the right is the entrance to the chapel, which is Tudor-arched with a transom. The 13th Street entrance is also Tudor-arched, with double columns of beveled-glass sidelights.
6. Roof: Hipped roof covered with new gray slate.

### C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans:
  - a. First: From the 13th Avenue entrance, three sets of double doors open into the auditorium. The pulpit and choir loft face north. Behind the northeast side of the auditorium is a large hall, fitted with a fireplace, and a second corridor.

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<sup>37</sup>Mary E. Detwiler, History of Altoona, 1849-1909 and First Methodist Church, 1849-1964 (Altoona: Privately printed, 1964), 35.



Fig. A.70 First Methodist Episcopal Church, 1208 13th St., interior, southeast end of sanctuary.

- b. Second: There are three balconies; the center one appears to be a recent addition. The first balcony is located along the northeast wall; the center balcony extends across the northwest wall; and the third balcony is located on the southwest side of the church.
2. Stairways: There are two stairways on the northeast side of the church, connecting the original building to the new wing and the balconies.
3. Flooring: The entrance vestibules have green and white tile floors. The auditorium and chapel originally had "elegant Smith Wilton carpet, in exact tone with the fresco." In 1953, this carpet was replaced with a deep wine-colored broadloom carpet. More recently the auditorium was recovered with bright red, wall-to-wall carpet.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: Plaster on lath. The ceiling is vaulted and richly embellished.
5. Windows: The large, Tudor-arched windows are stained-glass with biblical scenes.
6. Original furnishings: The original pews are of quartered oak.
7. Mechanical systems:
  - a. Heating: Steam.
  - b. Lighting: The church was equipped with electric lighting and emergency gas.

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- A. Original architectural drawings: None located.
- B. Early views: Photographs of the church under construction in 1906, and the completed church in its original, unaltered state, appear in Mary E. Detwiler, History of Altoona, 1849-1909 and First Methodist Church, 1849-1964 (Altoona: Privately printed, 1964), unnumbered. In possession of the First Methodist Episcopal Church.
- C. Bibliography:
  - 1. Primary sources:

Altoona, Pennsylvania. New York: Sanborn Map and Publishing Co., Ltd., 1888.

Insurance Maps of Altoona, Pennsylvania. New York: Sanborn-Perris Co., 1894.

Insurance Maps of Altoona, Blair County, Pennsylvania. New York: Sanborn Map Co., 1909.
  - 2. Secondary sources:

Clark, Charles B. Illustrated Altoona. Altoona: Privately printed, 1896.

Detwiler, Mary E. History of Altoona, 1849-1909 and First Methodist Church, 1849-1964. Altoona: Privately printed, 1964.

First Methodist Episcopal Church. Third Anniversary of the Dedication of the New Church. Altoona: Privately printed, 1910.

## BUILDINGS SURVEYED IN COMMERCIAL CENTER, FIRST WARD, LOUDONSVILLE, AND THE EAST SIDE

Following is a listing and brief description of all of the pre-1940 buildings in the Commercial Center, First Ward, Loudonsville, and East Side project areas surveyed by Alison K. Hoagland during summer 1988. The survey was designed to get an overall sense of the architectural character of the areas and to provide a point of departure for further research on each building. A number of buildings from this survey have been researched in more depth and appear in building summaries in chapters 4 and 5 and in HABS Reports in Appendix A; therefore, they have not been repeated in this listing. The buildings are listed in order by address. Avenues precede streets.

The descriptive information in this section was gathered primarily from visual examination. Structural materials were determined from Sanborn maps and the Building Record cards at the Tax Assessment Office. The historical information was obtained from the maps listed in Chapter 8. The 1882 Kaufmann map indicates the name of the owner. For the commercial buildings, the Building Record cards at the Tax Assessment Office give construction dates, but for the houses, which are mostly earlier, these dates are not as reliable. Several buildings display their construction dates on datestones.

The histories of the buildings in the First Ward have an additional source: the 1878 and 1901 Tax Assessment books. Information from these books, which list by tax payers' names, was entered into a computer so they could be cross-listed by address. The information included: owners, tenants, their occupations, and the values of buildings. The 1901 tax book indicates the specific address; the 1878 book was correlated with the 1878 city directory to determine addresses.

### COMMERCIAL CENTER

#### Kaufman's Gallery, 1301-03 11th Ave.

Constructed in about 1930, this building housed Penn Furniture from 1936 to 1946. The three-story building has a steel frame and brick walls. The facade features tripartite windows; the cornice has been removed.



#### RPS Corporation, 1304 11th Ave.

Probably built in 1907, this building is obscured by an aluminum front.



Kaufman's, 1305-07 11th Ave.

This windowless facade obscures a four-story building, probably constructed in the late nineteenth or early twentieth century for Louise Bergman as the Bonton Building.

McCrory's, 1306-10 11th Ave.

A fine example of the Art Moderne style, this building has a steel-frame structure and is faced with concrete on the exterior. The front is 62' wide and 46' high. The first-floor facade has glass storefronts; the two upper stories are divided into three bays separated by streamlined pilasters. A stepped parapet reads "McCrory's," the department store chain for which the building was constructed in 1937.

Woolworth's, 1312-16 11th Ave.

This monolithic facade apparently obscures two buildings, one three-story (probably built ca. 1900) and one two-story (probably built ca. 1924). As early as 1909, a 5 & 10-cent store was located on the site of the building on the left.

1318 11th Ave.

This three-story building has brick bearing walls and wood joists. Probably dating from the early twentieth century, the building is vacant and boarded up.

Gable's, 1320-30 11th Ave.

Long the pre-eminent department store of Altoona, the first Gable's building was constructed on this site in 1892. Added to through the years, the store building now occupies a large lot, along 14th Street to 12th Avenue. The monolithic facade was applied in 1970-71.





S. H. Kress & Co., 1404-06 11th Ave.

This two-story, stretcher-bond, brick building was constructed in 1922 for S. H. Kress & Co., a 5-cent to \$1 store. The structure has a 50' front, brick bearing walls, wood joists, and iron posts. The first-floor facade has been significantly altered with a brick wall. The upper floor is divided into four bays. The pair of windows in each bay appear to have been shortened; each is topped by an original grill. A parapet tops a modillioned brick cornice. The Kress store occupied the building until the 1970s.

Sellers Building, 1408-10 11th Ave.

The first floor of this three-story building has been altered with a modern storefront. The upper two floors have two symmetrical bays of three bays each. The second-floor windows have segmental arches with a continuous lintel. The third-floor windows are flat-arched, have been filled in with glass blocks, and are topped by ornamented brick panels that form the parapet. A plaque with the letter "S" adorns the parapet's center panel.



This building was constructed in 1910 for W. F. Sellers & Co. The company was founded in 1896 by Dr. Schlemm M. Sellers and his son William F., a jeweler who had apprenticed with the Rudisill Brothers. The Sellers family had owned the property since 1852. In 1917, Dr. Sellers gave his interest in the business to William, who was joined by his son Paul in 1945. The store was moved from the first to the second floor in 1935 and was open until the 1980s.

Saleme Insurance Building, 1409 11th Ave.

Built about 1920, this building is undergoing extensive renovations.

Kranich's, 1411 11th Ave.

Built in 1920, this store was heavily remodeled in 1972. The new facade obscures the character of the original building.



1413 11th Ave.

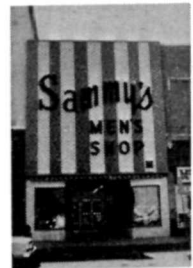
This building has a new facade which obscures the character of the original building.

1415 11th Ave.

This three-story building has brick bearing walls and wood joists. It probably dates from the early twentieth century. Although the storefront is new, the upper two stories feature five windows banded together in a single opening, which has splayed lintels.

1417 11th Ave.

The metal facade, applied in 1966, obscures the original 1923 building.

McIntyre's Candies, 1419 11th Ave.

This two-story building has brick bearing walls and wood joists. The large windows at the second story have been filled in with brick. The building dates from about 1920.

1422 11th Ave.

This two-story building has brick bearing walls and wood joists. The storefront is new, but the upper story features two large windows. The building was built about 1906.



W. L. Woodcock Building, 1424-30 11th Ave.

Built for W. L. Woodcock in 1928, this two-story building was occupied by the Montgomery Ward department store until the 1960s. It has an 86' front with brick bearing walls faced with red brick in a stretcher bond. The first-floor storefront has been altered. The upper story has four bays, each with a tripartite window. The bays are divided by piers that rise above the roofline and are crowned with ornamental concrete balls. A plaque in a panel over one bay is inscribed "W. L. WOODCOCK BUILDING 1928."

Sears Roebuck Building, 1425-27 11th Ave.

This three-story building has brick walls and a steel frame. Constructed in the 1920s, it was occupied by Sears Roebuck from 1929 until the 1960s. Although the storefront is new, the upper stories feature three-part windows in pilastered bays.

Brett Building, 1429-31 11th Ave.

This two-story, brick building opened in 1924 as the Brett Brothers department store. A different business than Brett's Inc. at 1210-16 11th Ave., Brett Brothers went out of business in the early 1940s. J. C. Penney's succeeded them in the space, then moved to the Logan Valley Mall in the 1970s.

Wolf's, 1501 11th Ave.

The metal facade obscures a five-story steel-framed building that had handsome tripartite windows. Founded as City Furniture Company in 1902, the company moved to this building, then new, in 1914. The furniture store acquired its new name, Wolf Furniture Company, in 1916. Wolf's has been in family hands since its founding; there are now twenty-one branch stores. This building is now occupied by offices.

1509 11th Ave.

Wood clapboards obscure the original character of this building, which was built in 1892 and remodeled in 1972.



Lincoln Deposit and Trust Co., 1108-10 12th Ave.

This two-story building measures approximately 50' x 120'. The steel-framed structure has a granite front of four Ionic columns in antis. Above them, the frieze reads "LINCOLN DEPOSIT AND TRUST COMPANY"; it is topped by a cornice and tall parapet. The Lincoln Deposit Company was one of five Altoona banks that did not survive the Depression. It was first listed in the 1917 city directory with an office in the Altoona Trust Building; its new building was completed in the same year. The building later became the home of the Royal Order of the Moose, which installed four bowling alleys in the basement. It is now the home of the Frohsinn Singing Society, a German club formed in 1864.

George Rudisill House, 1111 12th Ave.

This two-and-one-half-story building of wood frame and brick veneer was designed by Altoona architects Michael and Louis Beezer. It was built between 1894 and 1897 for George Rudisill, a jeweler who was also in business with his brother. George and William Rudisill operated a shop at 1310 11th Ave. William lived across the street from this house at 1120 11th Ave. The building is a striking and well-preserved example both of the Beezers' work in their hometown and of the stately homes that were once part of a prestigious downtown neighborhood (See Fig. 3.3).

Rothert's (Columbia Savings), 1200-04 12th Ave.

This two-story bank building is the result of a 1988 remodeling, in which the upper four floors of a turn-of-the-century Neoclassical building were removed. Rothert's, a furniture store, erected its building here in 1906. Although soon destroyed by fire, it was immediately rebuilt. Shollar and Hersh designed the original building.

PRR Offices (Reliance Building), 1201-09 12th Ave.

This three-story brick building measures approximately 120' x 120' in a U-shape. On the rear (parking lot side), the U-shaped plan and hipped roof are visible. There is a simple molded cornice with a parapet above. The first story has modern storefronts, the result of an extensive remodeling in 1963; the second and third stories are faced with beige brick. The original section of this building at 12th Avenue and 12th Street was built in 1863 for PRR offices. Tax books for 1864 listed it as "1 new building Emma St." [12th Avenue], valued at \$5,000; in 1866 it was called "engineers office." In 1873, when it was called the motive power office, a 51' x 44' addition was built on the 12th Avenue side. The first floor of this addition was used as a gymnasium and office for the company doctor, the second floor as a drafting room. In 1885, the roof was raised 6' to provide additional space for blueprint machines. An 1896 photograph showed its 12th Street frontage--brick, three stories, hipped roof, five bays wide with a door in the center. At this time it was described as measuring 80' x 100'; it housed the offices of the general superintendent of motive power, the motive power clerk, and the mechanical engineer. By 1909, the PRR extended the offices to the alley; a bridge across the alley connected the building to the main offices at 11th Avenue and 12th Street. With this addition, the



building measured approximately 120' on 12th Street, 100' on 12th Avenue. The PRR vacated it in the early 1920s. From 1925 to 1927, municipal offices were located here while a new city hall was being constructed. This altered building is all that remains of the management housing and two office buildings owned by the PRR in the commercial center.

Penn Furniture, 1421 12th Ave.

A three-story structure with glass-block windows, this building was built in 1922. Beginning in 1946, it was occupied by Penn Furniture.



Aaron Building, 1429 12th Ave.

Built about 1926, this five-story building has a brick exterior and a steel frame. Penn Furniture occupied this building from 1932 to 1936, and then returned in 1946.



Knights of Columbus Building, 1510 12th Ave.

Built in 1925-26 for the Knights of Columbus, this two-story building is in a Neoclassical design. The windows have been filled with glass block and brick.



1512 12th Ave.

This two-story brick front, added in about 1950, obscures a three-story wood-frame house.



1516 12th Ave.

This three-story building, faced with tapestry brick, was built in about 1914. Stores on the first floor open onto 12th Avenue, while apartments on the upper floor are accessible from a 16th Street entrance.





1100-02 13th Ave.

This three-story building was constructed in 1921. It housed the B. F. Goodrich Co. in 1922. The shutters are probably not original; the storefront has been altered.

1104 13th Ave.

This two-story gable-roofed house was probably built before 1882, when it was owned by J. E. Rainey.

1106 13th Ave.

This two-and-a-half-story house has a high, pyramidal, slate-covered roof. It was built between 1888 and 1894.

1108 13th Ave.

This three-story house, with a tile roof across the front, was built between 1894 and 1909.

1110 13th Ave.

This two-and-a-half-story house was built sometime 1894 and 1909.



1112 13th Ave.

This two-and-a-half-story building was built between 1888 and 1894. The wood-frame structure is covered with drop siding; there is an enclosed brick porch across the front.

Lamp Post Hotel, 1115 13th Ave.

This four-story hotel was built in 1922. Known as the Lamp Post Hotel, it had fifty rooms. By 1951, it was called the Taylor House, with forty-three rooms.

Joseph Ritchey House, 1116 13th Ave.

This two-and-a-half-story, wood-frame house is clad with clapboards and shingles. It has a cross-gable roof, covered with patterned slates, and a pent roof between the first and second floors. The front gable has ornamental woodwork. A projecting bay is centered on the first- and second-story facade, and a one-story porch with turned wood posts extends across the front. The house was probably built in 1891. In 1892, Joseph A. Ritchey, a PRR clerk, was listed as the first resident. He was subsequently listed as treasurer of the Altoona Gas Company in 1900, and as a clerk at the First National Bank in 1904. His wife, Emma, continued to reside here after Joseph's death in the 1930s.

1117 13th Ave.

Built between 1894 and 1909, this two-and-a-half-story building has a mansard roof and Flemish gable. The structure is wood frame; the exterior is brick.

1119 13th Ave.

This two-and-a-half-story house has a gambrel roof with wood shingles and a Palladian window. The first-floor porch across the front is partially enclosed. The brick-veneered house was built between 1894 and 1909.



American Legion Building, 1123 13th Ave.

This two-story building was constructed in 1928 for the Charles R. Rowan Post 228, American Legion. It is now occupied by the Irish American Club of Altoona. The scrolled pedimented doorway and stone quoins and cornice point to a Colonial Revival influence.

1212 13th Ave.

This aluminum-sided house was constructed before 1882. The side-gable roof and three-bay front are characteristic of the earlier houses in Altoona.

1214-16 13th Ave.

Two-story brick additions on the facades obscure the two houses behind. Both houses have cross-gable roofs and are aluminum-sided. The house at 1214 was constructed between 1888 and 1894, while the house at 1216 might date from before 1882.

1215 13th Ave.

This mansard-roofed house features a second-story enclosed sleeping porch. The wood-frame house was constructed between 1894 and 1909.

1217 13th Ave.

This cross-gabled house has a two-story porch across the front. Still clad in its original clapboards, the house was built between 1894 and 1909.



1218 13th Ave.

This three-story house is unusual: it features a two-bay front and a flat roof. The wood-frame house has a brick veneer and dates from between 1894 and 1909.

1219 13th Ave.

This two-and-a-half-story house has a complex roofline, a turret at the corner, a projecting bay at the second story, and an enclosed front porch. The house dates from between 1894 and 1909.

1220 13th Ave.

This two-and-a-half-story house has a gable-front roof with patterned shingles and a Palladian window. The second story is clad in wood shingles and has a slightly projecting bay. The first floor has a modern storefront. The house was built between 1894 and 1909.

1221-23 13th Ave.

This two-and-a-half-story double house has a swooping gambrel roof and Palladian-type window in its shingled gable. The aluminum-sided house was constructed between 1888 and 1909; the siding was added in 1976.

1222-24 13th Ave.

This two-story tile-fronted addition to the front, built in 1956, obscures the two houses behind. Both houses were built between 1894 and 1909; 1222 has a front-gable roof, with wood shingles in the gable, while 1224 is a three-story brick-veneered house with a flat roof.



1226 13th Ave.

This two-and-a-half-story house has a cross-gable roof and is sided with aluminum. The house was built about 1910.

1404 13th Ave.

This two-and-a-half-story cross-gabled house sits on a high foundation. The wood-frame building has its original drop siding. The house was built between 1882 and 1888.

Fleck Building, 1409 13th Ave.

This four-story garage was constructed of reinforced-concrete and steel. Constructed about 1923, the building served as a garage. Many of the openings have been closed up.

1414 13th Ave.

This two-and-a-half-story house has a gable-front roof with wood shingles and paired columns flanking the window in the gable. The one-story porch across the front has heart-shaped arches, also clad in wood shingles. The brick-veneered building was constructed between 1894 and 1909.

1426 13th Ave.

This two-story house is in a Colonial Revival style, unusual in downtown Altoona. Built in about 1929, the brick-veneered house features a hipped roof and splayed lintels over the windows.





1430 13th Ave.

This two-story house was apparently built as a double house before 1882, when it was owned by R. Widendofer. By 1894 it was a single-family dwelling; the two-story projecting bay could have been added at this time. The wood-frame house is covered with asphalt siding.

1500 13th Ave.

This two-story brick-veneered house has enclosed porches at both levels across the front. The house was built between 1909 and 1932.

1501-03 13th Ave.

This two-story side-gabled house may be one of the earlier houses downtown. It was built before 1882, when it was owned by J. P. Levan. The building has been sided with aluminum, and the doorway has been altered.

1502 13th Ave.

This two-and-a-half-story house features a gambrel roof and a one-story porch across the front. The brick-veneered building was constructed between 1909 and 1932.

1506 13th Ave.

This two-and-a-half-story gambrel-roofed house was constructed between 1894 and 1909. The wood-frame building has horizontal wood siding on the exterior. There are patterned wood shingles and a Palladian window in the gable; at the second story, the windows are banded together in the center of the facade with other wood ornament. The first floor is recessed, creating a porch.



James Ryan House, 1510 13th Ave.

This banked, two-and-a-half-story building is wood frame with a brick veneer. It has a gambrel roof with asphalt shingles and an altered window in the gable. The house was probably built between 1909, when the map indicates no building on this site, and 1912, when James P. Ryan is first listed as living here. Before 1912, Ryan, a machinist, lived next door with his family, which included Patrick Ryan, an engine repairer. James continued to live here until after 1939.

1512 13th Ave.

This gambrel-roofed house has asphalt shingles in the gable. The brick-veneered building has a one-story porch across the front. The house was constructed between 1909 and 1932.

Hutchison Block, 1112-18 12th St.

This three-story, common-bond brick building has brick bearing walls and measures approximately 89' x 70'. The first floor has modern storefronts, including a new entrance to the building labeled "CRIST BUILDING." The second and third stories have one-over-one-light, double-hung-sash with stone lintels and sills. A plaque between the second and third stories reads "MYERS." The roof is hipped on the 12th Avenue corner, and gable on the end toward 11th Avenue.



This building was built as the Hutchison Block about 1899. John M. Hutchison was a contractor and dealer in crushed stone and real estate and may have been responsible for commissioning this building. It has little stylistic reference to the 1890s and instead resembles a building from the 1860s or 1870s. Myers Brothers Florists, founded in 1879, first occupied the building in the 1930s and added the name plate to the facade. Myers Florists stayed in the family until 1958, and the business left the building about 1962.

B.P.O.E. 102, 1211-13 12th St.

This building was completed in 1905 as the Elks fraternal lodge. It is four stories high and measures approximately 50' x 100'. The structure is brick with iron posts and beams; the exterior is red brick laid in a Flemish bond. The water table is clad in a rough-faced limestone, while the first-floor is faced in a smooth-faced ashlar limestone. The second floor has a large center window with limestone surrounds; below the lintel is the inscription "102.BPOE.102." The rest of the windows have scrolled keystones in limestone. The cornice has been removed.



1210 13th St.

This two-story building was identical to the house next door at 1214-16 13th St., demolished in early 1989. This house has been sided with aluminum, and much of the architectural detail has been lost. The building was constructed before 1888.

1211 14th St.

This three-story apartment building was constructed about 1914. There is a three-level porch in the front corner. The flat roof is unusual in Altoona. The structure is wood frame with a brick veneer.

1213 14th St.

This two-and-a-half-story building has a two-story projecting bay topped by a cross-gable roof. The shed dormer on the front is probably an addition. The wood-frame building still has its original drop siding. The house was probably built before 1882, when it was owned by Woodcock.

1210-12 15th St.

The facade of this two-and-a-half-story building features a rounded corner at one side and a gently bowed bay at the other. The bay is crowned by a cross-gable roof which has patterned wood shingles and a Palladian window in the gable. The house was constructed between 1894 and 1909.

1211 15th St.

This three-story apartment building has brick bearing walls. The facade has tripartite windows; single windows in the center have been bricked up. There is a parapet and a flat roof. The building was constructed about 1925.



1306 15th St.

The many materials exhibited on this building imply a history of changes and additions. The house was probably built sometime between 1882 and 1888, and was originally a two-story wood-frame dwelling. Between 1909 and 1932, a concrete-block addition was made to the rear. The shed dormer is probably a later addition, as is the asphalt-shingle siding on the front of the second story.

**FIRST WARD**710-12 Chestnut Ave.

This concrete-block double house was constructed between 1901 and 1909. The building has a mansard roof and a two-level porch across the front. The structure has concrete-block bearing walls and wood joists.

718 Chestnut Ave.

This three-story apartment building features loggias in the center bay on the second and third stories. The first story has a modern storefront. The cornice has been removed from this brick-veneered building, constructed between 1909 and 1922.

800 Chestnut Ave.

This one- and two-story garage is constructed of reinforced concrete with a brick veneer. The one-story portion, measuring approximately 50' x 95', was constructed between 1909 and 1922. About 1949, the two-story portion, in an L-shape with a 25' front on Chestnut and a 38' front on 8th St., was added.

O. H. Kyle Building, 904-08 Chestnut Ave.

The two-story Kyle Building was constructed in 1921, and the lower section next door sometime after that. The Kyle building served as a wallpaper and paint store, while the building next door was a wholesale tea warehouse. Both buildings are hollow-tile construction with a brick veneer.



913 Chestnut Ave.

The windows of this building have been altered, but the building was apparently always two stories. A lodge occupied the second floor, accounting for the tall windows that were once there. The building was erected in 1927.

910-14 Chestnut Ave.

This five-story apartment building, constructed as a hotel between 1901 and 1909, features patterned brick in contrasting colors. Behind the building was the Louis Plack House, a mansard-roofed and towered structure that in 1888 was the largest house in Altoona, built before 1882. By 1896, the Plack House became the Juniata Club House. It was demolished in 1988, although the newer front remains.

Jos. Soyster Building, 915 Chestnut Ave.

This simple two-story brick building was constructed in 1922.

918 Chestnut Ave.

This three-story apartment building has an impressive two-story oriel on the corner. The first floor contains a store, featuring the original storefront. The brick bearing walls are veneered with a brown Roman brick. The building was constructed between 1901 and 1909.

Wolfe Building, 1001 Chestnut Ave.

This limestone-fronted building was constructed in 1918 to house the W. H. & L. C. Wolfe Company's Buick Sales and Service. Wolfe's was the first Buick dealer in Altoona, founded in 1905. The handsome two-story building now houses the printing presses of the Altoona Mirror.





DeLena Apartments, 1004-06 Chestnut Ave.

This four-story apartment building was built about 1908. The brick-veneered building features loggias at the second and third stories and a variety of window arrangements. The previous building on this site was owned by Lena Roger, who probably gave her name to the new apartment building.

1011 Chestnut Ave.

The stone front on this building dates from between 1894 and 1909, and was added by the Wolfe Brothers. The building served as their store, where they sold cigars, bicycles, and sporting goods. The building was valued at \$4,500 in 1901. Previously, the building served as the Wolfes' house, as well as their store (then just a grocery). Originally brick-veneered, the building was constructed before 1878 when Martha J. Wolf, the widow of John P., had a grocery store here.

1013 Chestnut Ave.

This three-story house has been altered by the removal of the cornice and the installation of a new storefront. Constructed between 1894 and 1901, the building was owned by the Mutual Building and Loan Association and valued at \$3,500. In 1909, the building housed a store in front, a lunch room behind, and a bake house behind that.

808-10 Green Ave.

This two-story building has had many of its openings filled with brick and tile. Originally six bays wide, it apparently had a gable-front section added later. The building apparently dates from between 1922 and 1932.

814 Green Ave.

The present brick front on the building probably dates from about 1920, but behind it is a two-story building constructed between 1888 and 1894 as a livery stable. In 1901, Duke & Arthur kept nine horses in this building, valued at \$3,000. In 1896 they advertised "Cabs for funerals and weddings a specialty."



816-18 Green Ave.

This four-story building features stylized pilasters and a parapet roof. Built in 1921 for the Penn-Overland Company, the reinforced-concrete structure has a tapestry-brick veneer. Used for automobile sales and service, it was described as "one of the city's larger automobile distributing plants." (*Altoona*, Chamber of Commerce, 1925, 43)

904-08 Green Ave.

A metal front, now partially removed, obscures two commercial buildings. The one toward 9th Street was constructed between 1894 and 1909 for the Altoona Manufacturing Company; in 1922 the building housed a printing plant (*The Labor News*) on the first floor, a hair-net factory on the second, and a lodge room on the third. The other building was built in 1911 for Harry Slutzker, Men's and Ladies' Furnishings. The arcaded windows are just visible.

801 Howard Ave.

This two-story house with a side-gable roof is sided with aluminum and has had major alterations to the windows. The house was built before 1878, when it was occupied by Harry Folk, a blacksmith. In 1901 Folk, then foreman of the PRR's blacksmith shop, owned the building and still lived there.

803 Howard Ave.

This two-story mansard-roofed house still has its original clapboard siding, although the windows have been altered. The house was built before 1878, probably for John L. Burley, foreman of the PRR's cabinet shop. Burley lived here until after 1901. By then, the building was owned by Harry C. Burley, a cabinet maker. Guy S. Burley, also a cabinetmaker, boarded here as well.

805 Howard Ave.

This house was built before 1878, probably for John L. Benedict, a car builder, later listed as a postal clerk, who owned and occupied this house until after 1901. His sons, William, a clerk, and Maurice, a machinist, lived here with him. The two-story house has a side-gable roof and a two-story projecting bay. The wood-frame structure has an asphalt exterior.



907 Howard Ave.

This narrow, two-and-a-half-story building has a tall gambrel roof and a one-story enclosed porch. The house was built between 1901 and 1909.

909 Howard Ave.

This two-and-a-half-story gambrel-roofed house has a brick veneer on a wood frame. There is a one-story enclosed porch across the front and an oriel at the second story. The house was built between 1909 and 1932.

911 Howard Ave.

This two-and-a-half-story house has asbestos shingles on a wood frame. The gambrel-roofed house has its original Colonial Revival front porch. The building was built between 1901 and 1909.

913-15 Howard Ave.

This two-and-a-half-story house is veneered with buff brick. There is a hipped roof and a one-story porch across the front. The building was constructed between 1909 and 1932.

917 Howard Ave.

This two-and-a-half-story house has a side-gable roof and a large gable-roofed dormer. The brick-veneered building has a one-story porch across the front. The building was probably built about 1906.



Armory, 1000 Howard Ave.

This battlemented building was constructed as an armory about 1922. The two-story building has a brick veneer and a canted corner entrance. The building is now a gymnasium.

1005-07 Howard Ave.

This double house has aluminum siding and altered windows. The building was probably constructed between 1882 and 1888. In 1901, it was owned by the Wolfe Brothers and valued at \$3,500. One side of the house was occupied by John Martin, a clerk for the PRR.

1009 Howard Ave.

This two-and-a-half-story house has a cross-gable roof and its original drop siding. The one-story porch across the front has columns on piers and is probably a later addition. The house was probably built before 1882, when it was owned by H. Cornman. In 1896, it was owned and occupied by Samuel Patterson, a blacksmith; the house was valued at \$1,800.

1010 Howard Ave.

This two-story house, with aluminum siding and altered windows, was probably built before 1878, when it was one of six houses here owned by Frederick Bloomhardt, a shoemaker. Bloomhardt continued to own it after 1901, when it was occupied by John B. Pickel, a car builder.

1013-15 Howard Ave.

This two-story house still has its original drop siding. The house, which has a projecting bay and a partially enclosed porch across the front, was probably built between 1894 and 1901, when it was owned by William H. Slep, the publisher of the Mirror. The house was occupied by C. B. Miller, a machinist.



1014 Howard Ave.

This two-story house was built before 1873, when it was owned and occupied by William Gable, a machinist and sheet iron worker for the PRR, who remained here until after 1904. The three-bay house has a side-gable roof and a one-story porch across the front. The exterior is covered with asbestos shingles.

1017 Howard Ave.

This two-and-a-half-story cross-gabled house was probably built sometime between 1901 and 1909. The house has a two-level porch across the front and its original drop siding.

1019 Howard Ave.

This two-and-a-half-story house has a prominent cross gable with patterned wooden shingles and a Palladian window in the gable. Below is a two-story projecting bay. The house was probably built sometime between 1901 and 1909.

1020-22 Howard Ave.

This two-story house with a five-bay front and a center-hall plan is sided with aluminum. The house may have been constructed before 1878, when it was owned and occupied by Harry Nicholson, a ticket agent. In 1901, it was owned by the Vigilant Building and Loan Association and valued at \$4,000. The house was occupied by Thomas Hemphill, a coal dealer.

701 Lexington Ave.

This two-and-a-half-story house has a mansard roof and a three-bay front. The wood-framed building is veneered with brick. The house was built before 1885, probably for Charles Brooke. In 1885 Brooke sold it to Ezekiel H. Wherry, foreman of PRR's upholstery shop. A three-story addition in the rear was constructed in 1922, when the house was converted to apartments.





705 Lexington Ave.

This aluminum-sided house was built before 1878, when it was owned and occupied by Charles Brooks, a carpenter. In 1901, it was owned by Charles F. Carpenter, who ran a cigar store and pool room downtown. George H. Carpenter, a depot gateman for the PRR, also lived there. The house, valued at \$2,800, has a side-gable roof and a three-bay front.

709 Lexington Ave.

This two-and-a-half-story house has a cross-gable roof over a projecting bay. The house, still with its original drop siding, was probably constructed between 1901 and 1909.

711 Lexington Ave.

Probably built as a double house before 1882, this house has been altered by the application of aluminum siding and the alteration of the windows and doors. In 1882 it was owned by Barney Lynch. In 1901, the Plempbell family, including C. A., an inspector; Christ, an invalid; and H. J., a chef; occupied one side. The other was occupied by the Plitts: painter, David H., and laborer, George M.

712 Lexington Ave.

This two-and-a-half-story house was probably built between 1909 and 1932. The side-gable roof has a hipped dormer over a projecting bay. There is an enclosed porch on the first story.

713 Lexington Ave.

This two-and-a-half-story house has a mansard roof with patterned shingles. The brick-veneered building has a two-story projecting bay and a one-story porch across the front. The house was probably built between 1894 and 1909.



714 Lexington Ave.

The construction history of this stuccoed building is difficult to unravel. The side-gabled portion may be the original building, constructed before 1882 when it was owned by R. A. O. Kerr. The front-gable portion is probably an addition, and the windows have most likely been altered. In 1901, the house was owned and occupied by Kerr, a prominent insurance man. His sons also lived there: James, a tinner; John, a painter; and Homer, a cabinet maker.

715 Lexington Ave.

This hip-roofed house was probably constructed between 1909 and 1922. The brick-veneered dwelling has two oriels at the second level, and a one-story porch, rounded at one end, with battered piers.

804-06 Lexington Ave.

This brick-veneered double house was built before 1878 for Andrew J. Sprankle. In 1878, it was occupied by Samuel Kuhn, a grocer, and David Gilland, a former mayor. In 1901, it was owned by Charles B. Dudley, the famous PRR chemist, who lived next door at 802. Dudley rented the house, valued at \$4,500, to Charles C. Burley, a cabinetmaker, and David F. Greenawalt, a travel agent.

807-09 Lexington Ave.

This mansard-roofed double house was probably constructed before 1894, probably in the 1880s. In 1901, it was owned by Ella Paul; it was valued at \$3,000. George Cramer, a cabinet maker, lived there. The asphalt-sided house has a projecting window at the second level.

810 Lexington Ave.

This hipped-roof house has a gable dormer and its original drop siding. The house was probably built before 1882, when it was owned by Harrison Oburn. By 1901, Oburn was dead, but his wife continued to live here. She had two boarders: John McCormack, a machinist, and Frank Miller, a clerk at her husband's store. Oburn also had a rental house at 915-17 Lexington.



811 Lexington Ave.

This cross-gabled house, with its original drop siding, was constructed before 1878, when it was owned and occupied by William J. Denning, a storekeeper for the PRR. He lived here until after 1901. The windows have been altered, and the two-story porch across the front is probably an addition.

812 Lexington Ave.

This aluminum-sided house was built before 1878, when William Lingle, a dispatcher, lived there. In 1882 it was owned by J. McKnight. In 1901, John S. Seeds, a clerk, owned the house, valued at \$2,000. Harry Leader, a clerk for the PRR, also lived there. The house has a side-gable roof with paired brackets at the cornice. The shed dormer is probably not original.

813 Lexington Ave.

This mansard-roofed house probably dates from before 1882, when it appears on a map labeled "Dougherty." In 1893 it was occupied by Daniel B. Dougherty, who owned a hardware store. The house was valued at \$2,800 in 1901. The house has its original drop siding, but the porch has been enclosed.

816-18 Lexington Ave.

This large mansard-roofed house has brick bearing walls. The windows on the front have been altered, and a porch has been removed. The house dates from before 1878, when it was owned by Mary McKnight, the widow of Robert. In 1901 it was owned by [Mrs.] C. C. Mason, who did not live there. It was occupied by Andrew Farnsworth, a clerk at the Altoona Bank; George Coray, manager of the Grand Union Tea Company; William A. Lander, a dry goods merchant; and E. Reith, a doctor. The house was valued at \$5,000.

911-13 Lexington Ave.

This large gable-fronted double house has a brick veneer. The porch across the front has been enclosed with a different brick. The house was built before 1882, when it was owned by William McCormick. In 1901, his widow owned the house, then valued at \$4,000. The house was occupied by Samuel B. Miller, Frank Keith, W. H. Miller--all laborers--and Charles Hoyt, a civil engineer.



1005 Lexington Ave.

This mansard-roofed house is covered with asphalt siding. Fine detailing remains at two cornices, and the porch across the front may be original. The house was before 1878, when it was owned by George F. Marsh, a merchant tailor; the house was valued at \$600. He continued to own it until after 1901, when it was valued at \$4,000.

1006 Lexington Ave.

This two-and-a-half-story cross-gabled house has its original drop siding and an elaborate porch across the front. The house was probably built between 1888 and 1894. In 1901 it was owned by Benjamin F. Mulhollen, a "gentleman"; the house was valued at \$3,000.

1007-09 Lexington Ave.

This hipped-roof, gabled, and turreted house is harmed by the enclosure of the porch across the front. The brick-veneered house was probably built shortly before 1901, when it was owned by David S. Keith, superintendent of public schools. The house was valued at \$5,500.

1010 Lexington Ave.

This two-and-a-half-story house is veneered with pressed brick. There is a large gable dormer over a projecting bay. The first-floor porch, which has a Neoclassical pediment, has been enclosed with brick. The house was built shortly before 1901 for Daniel Laughman, a coal dealer, who was also president of the Mutual Building and Loan Association. The house was valued at \$5,000. Laughman owned a previous house on the site as early as 1878.

1011-13 Lexington Ave.

This two-and-a-half-story house has a one-story porch across the front with jigsawn ornament. The house, which is extremely wide but was apparently built as a single-family residence, was erected in 1889 for John P. Lafferty, a funeral director, who had previously lived next door at No. 1015. In 1901 the house was valued at \$5,500.



1012 Lexington Ave.

This two-and-a-half-story house has a cross-gable roof and its original drop siding. The house was built before 1878, when it was owned by James Mallett, a clerk in the PRR general superintendent's office. In 1901, Mallett still owned the house, then valued at \$2,600.

1014 Lexington Ave.

This two-and-a-half-story house has a two-story bay perched on top of the porch across the front. The gambrel-roofed house has its original drop siding, with wood shingles on the third-story gable dormer. The house was probably built between 1888 and 1894. In 1901 it was owned by C. T. Witherow, motive power clerk for the PRR, who was also an officer of the Blair County Building and Loan Association. The house was valued at \$3,600.

1017 Lexington Ave.

This hipped-roof house has gable dormers and projecting bays. The wood-frame house, covered with asphalt siding, has a one-story porch across the front. The house was probably built between 1894 and 1901, when it was owned by John Clingerman, a realtor, and valued at \$4,000. The house was occupied by George McFarland, a machinist.

1018 Lexington Ave.

This two-story house with a side-gable roof is covered with asphalt siding. The house was probably built before 1878 for Samuel Shank, a car builder. In 1901 it was still owned by Shank, but occupied by A. T. Erhard, a clerk. The house was valued at \$2,000.

1020 Lexington Ave.

This gambrel-roof house has a two-story porch across the front and its original drop siding. The house was probably built between 1901 and 1909.





1022 Lexington Ave.

This two-and-a-half-story house has a cross-gable roof. The windows and porches have been heavily altered. The house was probably built before 1878, when it was owned by Isaac Beck, a car builder. In 1901, it was owned and occupied by his widow, Mary. Arthur Askew, a clerk, boarded here. The house was valued at \$4,000.

1317 7th St.

This two-and-a-half-story house has a cross-gable roof and aluminum siding. The house was probably built between 1894 and 1901, when Henry H. Riggin, a foreman at the Juniata shops, owned the house, valued at only \$1,500.

1319 7th St.

This two-and-a-half-story house has a cross-gable roof with wood shingles in the gable and the original drop siding. The one-bay porch is a recent addition. The house was built between 1901 and 1909.

1214 8th St.

This two-story brick building has a two-story porch, also brick, and a flat roof. The house was built between 1922 and 1932.

1216 8th St.

This brick-veneered house has a mansard roof with patterned-slate shingles on the mansard. A polygonal roof over a two-story projecting bay rises through the mansard. The house was built between 1888 and 1894. In 1901, it was owned by the estate of Robert Green, and occupied by Parson H. Crawford, a collector. The house was valued at \$3,200.



1300 8th St.

This small gable-front building, only two bays wide, was constructed before 1882, when it was owned by Mrs. Hirst. In 1901, it was occupied by John M. Hirst, a machinist. The building is covered with asphalt siding.

1314 8th St.

This large, square house, altered by the application of stucco and probably other changes, was constructed between 1909 and 1932. In 1932 it was a house; by 1951 it had been converted to apartments.

1318 8th St.

This two-and-a-half-story house has a brick veneer and a cross-gable roof. The gable has been covered with aluminum siding. The house was probably built between 1909 and 1932.

1401 8th St.

This two-story, gable-front house still has its original drop siding. The L-shaped building has a three-bay front and a two-story addition in the ell. The house was built between 1882 and 1894.

1125 9th St.

This three-story, three-bay building has segmental-arched windows, a flat roof, and brick bearing walls. The building was constructed between 1909 and 1922; in 1932 it was a store.



1301 9th St.

This two-and-a-half-story house has a cross-gable roof and asphalt siding on the walls. The house was probably built between 1901 and 1909.

1316 9th St.

This four-square house has a hipped roof with a gable dormer. The building is sided with narrow-board siding and asphalt shingles. A one-story porch across the front is enclosed. The date of construction is uncertain.

1401 9th St.

This large house has a one-story porch across the front supported by paired columns. The hipped roof is covered with slate; there is a cross gable over a two-story projecting bay. The house was constructed between 1901 and 1909.

1403-05 9th St.

This six-bay double house was constructed before 1882, when it was owned by Louis Plack, one of the largest landholders in the neighborhood. In 1901 it was still owned by Plack and valued at \$3,000; it was occupied by Grant Sheffer, a merchant. The house has new asphalt shingles on its mansard roof and vinyl siding on the exterior walls.

1122-24 10th St.

This large front-gable double house has a brick veneer and a one-story porch across the front. The house was probably built between 1901 and 1909.



1216-18 10th St.

This two-and-a-half-story gable-front house has an unusual triangular-headed window in the gable. There is a three-bay facade and the house retains its original drop siding. The house was built between 1894 and 1909.

1300-02 10th St.

This two-story double house, now clad in asphalt siding, has a side-gable roof with bracketed cornice. The two-story porch across the front is partially enclosed. The house was built before 1878, when it was occupied by Samuel B. Miller, a clerk, and Jacob Roush, a watchman. In 1901 it was owned by William Hare, a stock dealer, and valued at \$5,500. It was occupied by H. W. Swoope, an operator, and John Keihl, a clerk.

1217-19 10th St.

This brick-veneered double house with a side-gable roof with two gambrel dormers was built between 1894 and 1909.

1301-03 10th St.

This brick-veneered double house has a hipped roof and hipped-roof dormers. There is a one-story porch across the front. The house was built between 1901 and 1909.

1305 10th St.

With aluminum siding and altered windows, this house is difficult to read. It was apparently built between 1901 and 1909.



1308 10th St.

This two-and-a-half-story house has aluminum siding on the sides, brick on the front, and shingles in the gable. The second-floor windows, of different sizes, are grouped under the same segmental arch. The porch across the front has been enclosed. The house was built between 1909 and 1922.

1319 10th St.

This large brick-veneered house was probably built between 1901 and 1909. The hipped roof has cross gables and modillions at the cornice. Most of the openings are segmental arches.

1405-07 10th St.

This two-and-a-half-story house was apparently built as a single-family house between 1882 and 1888. The house has two projecting two-story bays with gable roofs and the original drop siding. The entrance is in the center, off of a brick porch. In 1901, this house was owned by W. H. and L. C. Wolfe.

1409-11 10th St.

This brick-veneered double house is similar in form to the one next door at 1405-07, with two-story projecting bays with gable roofs. Like the one next door, this house was owned by W. H. and L. C. Wolfe in 1901. One side was occupied by Frank L. Akers, a druggist, and A. G. Spingler, a jeweller. William Wolfe, one of the owners, lived in the half on the corner.

Stroehmann Bakeries, 1416 10th St.

This building was constructed for the Peightal Bakery. On May 25, 1931, Stroehmann's moved here, and has occupied it since. This building has had repeated additions and is now two stories of alternating bands of bricks; most of the windows have been covered.





1300-02 11th St.

This three-story store has a brick veneer and a flat roof. The facade has four round-arched windows on the third floor and four segmental-arched windows on the second floor. New siding obscures most of the first floor. The building was probably built between 1888 and 1894.

1308 11th St.

This house is obscured by ivy, except for the slate roof and the form of a corner tower. The brick-veneered house was probably built between 1901 and 1909.

1312 11th St.

This two-story building has paired windows and a flat roof. The brick bearing walls are faced with tapestry brick. The house was built about 1922.

1316-18 11th St.

This side-gable house has a peculiar cross gable over a blank bay; the other windows are paired. The two-story addition on one end appears to be enclosed porches. The house was probably constructed in 1914.

1400 11th St.

This two-story two-bay house has a side-gable roof. It is covered with aluminum siding and has a new porch around the door. The house was built before 1878, when Edward Baker, a cabinet maker, lived there. A. Bechhoefer owned it in 1882. In 1901, it was valued at \$1,600. It was owned by the estate of G. D. Randolph and occupied by Edgar C. Marks, a carpenter.



1402 11th St.

This two-and-a-half-story house has a cross gable over a projecting bay. There is slate on the roof and in the gable; the porch appears to be original, and the enclosure is an early alteration, if not original. The house was probably built sometime 1901 and 1909.

1404 11th St.

This two-and-a-half-story L-shaped house, now covered with aluminum siding, was built about 1895. In 1896, it was occupied by Joseph B. G. Bechhoefer, who sold shoes, and at least five family members. By 1901 it was valued at \$2,000 and owned by Walter Penn Shipley. S. L. McKnight, an engineer, lived here.

1406-08 11th St.

This gable-front house has a canted entrance in the corner, flanked by show windows, which are probably an alteration. The aluminum-sided house was built before 1882, when A. Bechhoefer owned it. In 1901 it was occupied by J. G. B. Bechhoefer, who five years earlier was living next door.

**LOUDONSVILLE**1814 11th Ave.

This gable-fronted house has brick-veneered walls and shingles in the gable. Constructed between 1894 and 1909, the house has a four-bay facade and a porch across the front.

1812 11th Ave.

This cross-gabled house was constructed before 1882, when it was owned by G. Anderson. The house is covered with asphalt siding and has a one-story porch across the front.



1818 11th Ave.

This five bay, Colonial Revival-style building has brick veneer over a wood frame. There is a one-story porch with Doric columns mounted on brick piers. The window in the center of the second story has Ionic pilasters and an elaborate pediment. The house was probably built around 1909 when it first appears on the Sanborn maps. Frederick Robaugh, an engineer, was listed as living here from 1912 through the 1930s.

1826 11th Ave.

This gambrel-roofed house has a large enclosed porch across the front. Brick-veneered, the house was constructed between 1909 and 1932. The gable is faced with aluminum siding.

1828 and 1830 11th Ave.

These two houses are virtual mirror images of each other. Both aluminum-sided, they feature front gables, modillioned cornices, two-story projecting bays, and one-story porches across the front. The house at 1830 is slightly less altered, with an oval window next to the door and a Palladian window in the gable.

I.O.O.F. Building, 1716 12th Ave.

This four-story steel-framed building was built to house the I.O.O.F. lodge rooms on the third and fourth floors, offices on the second, and stores on the first. Today, there are apartments on the upper floors. Constructed in 1924, the building is faced with brick and trimmed with concrete.

1808 12th Ave.

This house has been altered by the application of aluminum siding and the removal of several windows. Built sometime between 1882 and 1894, it has a cross-gable roof and apparently had a two-story projecting bay.



1809 12th Ave.

This two-story, two-bay house has a side-gable roof and narrow-board siding. Featuring large windows, the building dates from between 1894 and 1909.

1812-14 12th Ave.

Veneered with buff brick, this two-and-a-half-story house has a slate-covered hip roof and an oriel at the second story. The house was probably built about 1904.

1813 12th Ave.

Two stories on a high foundation, this aluminum-sided building has a side-gable roof and a three-bay front. The house was constructed between 1882 and 1894.

1818 12th Ave.

This cross-gable house has been covered with vinyl siding. The three-bay front has a one-story porch. The house was constructed between 1882 and 1894.

1819 12th Ave.

Similar to the house across the street at No. 1818, this house has a cross-gable roof and a three-bay front. Built between 1882 and 1894, it is covered with asphalt siding, and the brackets at the cornice remain.



1820-22 12th Ave.

This two-story house has a side-gable roof and a three-bay front. The walls are clad with drop siding. The house was probably built before 1882, when it was owned by Stronton.

1821-23 12th Ave.

This two-and-a-half-story house has a cross-gable roof with fishscale shingles in the gable. The porch across the front has been altered, and a picture window has been installed at the first story. The wood-frame house, covered with drop siding, was constructed between 1894 and 1909.

1824 12th Ave.

This vinyl-sided house was constructed between 1894 and 1909. The L-shaped house has a hipped roof with a gable dormer and a one-story porch across the front.

1825-27 12th Ave.

This four-square house has a hip roof with hip-roof dormer. The house is veneered with brick and has a one-story porch across the front. The house was constructed between 1932 and 1951.

1828 and 1830 12th Ave.

These two houses are almost identical in appearance. Built about 1904, they both have cross-gable roofs, oriel windows at the second story, and one-story porches across the front. Both have been covered with asphalt siding.





1714-16 13th Ave.

This two-story, three-bay house has a side-gable roof and an exterior covered with asphalt siding. The house was probably constructed between 1882 and 1888.

1805 13th Ave.

This two-story, wood-frame and clapboard house has a one-story projecting bay and a porch across the facade. It was built before 1873, probably for John Galbraith who was first listed as living here in that year. Galbraith was identified as a hostler in 1873, an engineer in 1886, a switchman in 1890, and a PRR laborer in 1896. The "Mrs. Galbright" who is noted as owner of the building on the 1882 map was probably his mother, Rebecca. By 1925, John had died and his widow, Mary, lived here.

1807 13th Ave.

This two-and-a-half-story, cross-gable building has horizontal wood siding on a wood frame. There are bracketed cornice returns at each gable and bracketed cornices at each window across the three-bay facade. The one-story porch across the front has turned wood columns and a spindle frieze; balusters have been replaced by a low clapboard wall. The house was probably built around 1894 for John Barnes, a fireman. Barnes had died by 1914 when the house was occupied by his widow, Anna M., a bookkeeper, and their two daughters: Ruth, who became a music teacher, and Katherine, a clerk.

1812 13th Ave.

This aluminum-sided house has a cross-gable roof and a one-story enclosed porch across the front. The house was probably constructed between 1894 and 1909.

1814 13th Ave.

This two-and-a-half-story house has a large gable dormer and a slate roof. The three-bay front is covered with asphalt siding and the sides are vinyl-covered. The house was constructed between 1894 and 1909.



1818 13th Ave.

This two-and-a-half-story house has a cross-gable roof and asphalt siding. The house was probably constructed between 1882 and 1894.

1822 13th Ave.

This two-story, three-bay house was probably constructed before 1882 when it was owned by a man named Mock. The house has a side-gable roof and asphalt shingle siding.

1823 13th Ave.

This two-story, three-bay house, like the one across the street, has a side-gable roof. Probably constructed before 1882, when it was owned by S. Wood, the house is sided with aluminum.

1824 13th Ave.

This two-story, gable-fronted house has its original narrow-board siding and a one-story porch across the front. The house was probably built before 1882, when it was owned by W. Patton.

1825 13th Ave.

This narrow (14' front) house actually adjoins the house next door at No. 1823, but seems to have been constructed later. With a side-gable roof and drop siding, the house was probably constructed between 1894 and 1909.

Bell Telephone Building, 1105-19 16th St.

This three-story Neoclassical building has a steel frame, concrete floors and roof, and a buff brick exterior. The two- and three-story building was constructed for Bell Telephone in 1924 at a cost of \$1 million. The building has had several additions, and now extends from 11th to 12th avenues along 16th Street.



The Triangle, 1201-03 16th St.

This three-story brick-faced structure has mosaic tile stringcourses over the first and third floors. Built in 1924, the flat-roofed building has stores on the ground floor and apartments above.

Goodyear, 1205-13 16th St.

This Art Moderne building was probably constructed in the 1920s. Although some windows have been filled in, the stylized pilasters with silver caps, chevron designs in brick, and flat roof remain. The building is steel framed with a buff brick exterior.

1215 16th St.

This two-and-a-half-story brick-veneered house has a cross-gable roof over a projecting bay. The house was constructed between 1894 and 1909.

1217 16th St.

This three-story four-bay structure has a flat roof and a brick veneer. The windows have splayed lintels and keystones. The house was constructed between 1894 and 1909.

1200 17th St.

This two-story commercial building is vacant and its windows are boarded up. Constructed about 1920, the building contained five stores. The building is veneered with tapestry brick and has glazed terra cotta or tile ornament at the cornice line.



First Baptist Church and Rectory, 1201 17th St.

The congregation of the First Baptist Church was formed in 1847, and by the next year had thirty-seven members, including David Robeson, who owned the farm where Altoona was sited. In 1853, the congregation moved into its first building, and in 1869 built a larger one next door, at the corner of 15th Street and 11th Avenue. In 1912 that church was destroyed by fire, and in June 1913, the congregation bought a site at the corner of 17th Street and 12th Avenue for a new church. Ground was broken on June 15, 1914, and the church was dedicated February 6, 1916. The Neoclassical building is faced with buff brick and trimmed with white glazed terra cotta. The low dome is covered with pantiles, and there is a tetrastyle Ionic portico facing 17th Street. Construction cost for the building was \$96,509.80. The rectory next door on 17th Street has a buff brick veneer over a wood frame. It has a hipped roof with cross gables and a two-story projecting bay. A one-story porch across the facade is supported with Ionic columns.

1204-06 17th St.

Now a funeral home, this large brick-veneered house features a corner tower with a bell-cast roof. The hipped roof of the house has gable dormers, and there is a one-story porch across the front. The house was constructed between 1894 and 1909.

1210 17th St.

This two-story, three-bay house is sided with aluminum. There is a side-gable roof and a one-story porch across the front. The building dates from before 1882, when it was owned by C. Ayes.

1212 17th St.

This buff brick-veneered house has a gambrel roof with a Palladian window in the gable. The one-story porch across the front is enclosed, but it is probably an original enclosure. The house was built between 1894 and 1909.

VFW Memorial Home, 1301 17th St.

This two-story brick building has pediments at the corners. All windows have been filled with glass block. Built for Post No. 3, Veterans of Foreign Wars, the cornerstone was laid in 1929.



Agudath Achim Synagogue, 1306 17th St.

This synagogue has a gable front of varied-color bricks. There are three round-arched doorways across the front, with foliate concrete ornament in the spandrels and above. A small rose window with a Star of David is set in the top half of the front facade. This building was completed in 1925; it replaced another on the site built in 1893. The congregation was chartered in 1885 and was originally orthodox, then moved toward conservatism in the 1930s.

1105 18th St.

This building was constructed as a house with a side-gable roof between 1882 and 1894. The portion of the building on 11th Avenue was added in 1929, as a plaque attests. The 11th Avenue facade now has a parapeted gable front and a modern storefront.

1200-08 18th St.

This three-story building has a steel frame and a brick veneer. The storefronts have been altered. The building was constructed between 1909 and 1932.

1212 18th St.

This building is constructed of hollow tiles, visible on the sides; the front is covered with brick. The flat-roofed building is three stories tall and two bays wide. It was constructed between 1909 and 1932.

1106-08 19th St.

This two-and-a-half-story house was constructed between 1894 and 1909. Now covered with asphalt shingles, the house has a cross-gable roof and a one-story porch across the front.

1206 19th St.

This house was identical to the one next door at 1208, which was demolished in 1988. This L-shaped house is covered with aluminum siding on the front and asphalt siding on the sides. The house was built between 1894 and 1909.





**EAST SIDE**714 8th Ave.

This two-story, three-bay house is covered with aluminum siding. The house has a side-gable roof and a one-story porch across the front. The house was built between 1882 and 1888.

918-20 8th Ave.

This double building has two histories, as indicated by the two kinds of aluminum siding. The right half (No. 918) was probably constructed before 1882; by 1909 it was a store and dwelling. The left half (No. 920) was probably constructed a little later; it remains a residence. The two halves are united by a large cross gable in the center of the roof.

1000 8th Ave.

This two-story, three-bay house has a side-gable roof and aluminum siding. The house dates from before 1882, when it was owned by "J. O'Conner."

1002 8th Ave.

This three-story commercial building has a brick veneer and an altered storefront. The building was probably constructed between 1909 and 1932 when two stores occupied it. It is possible that the building is older, and merely received its brick veneer at that time.

1004 8th Ave.

This two-story building has been altered by the application of aluminum siding and the removal of windows. The house probably dates from before 1882, when it was owned by C. Bailey.



Theodore Wigton House, 1106 8th Ave.

This two-and-a-half-story building has notable Italianate details: two-story projecting bay, hoodmolds over the windows, paired brackets at the cornice, and pierce-work ornament in the gable. The first-floor porch is partially enclosed. This house was built in 1880 for Theodore H. Wigton. The son of an ironmaster, Wigton came to Altoona in 1872 and became one of the founders of the Altoona Bank. He served as its cashier until after 1893. In 1902 the Altoona Bank merged with the Central Pennsylvania Trust Company to form the Central Trust Company.



About 1895 Andrew Kipple, foreman of the PRR freight-car shops, acquired the house. His son, Andrew S., a car inspector, also lived here. In 1900 Kipple was listed as the treasurer of the Fairview Cemetery Association. By 1939 the house had been converted into a double house. Kipple's widow still lived here; a dentist occupied the other half. The house is now a funeral parlor.

1108 8th Ave.

Constructed between 1894 and 1909, this hipped-roof house has a large gable and a two-story projecting bay. The house has a brick veneer and a one-story porch across the front. There is an unusual horseshoe-shaped window in the gable.

1116 8th Ave.

This two-story, gable-front house is covered with asbestos shingles. The house was constructed before 1882, when it was owned by R. J. Crozier. By 1932, there was a store in part of this house; the partially enclosed porch is probably a remnant of that time.

Union Bank (Mid-State Bank), 1126-28 8th Ave.

Founded in 1886 as the Fidelity Banking Company, the Union Bank acquired its name in 1904 and was always located at this site. In 1922 this handsome, five-story building was constructed; at that time, this was the only bank on the East Side. In 1931, the bank closed; it was acquired by the Altoona Trust Company, which now operates a branch office here. The steel-framed building has a brown brick exterior.

1113-21 9th Ave.

This complex is composed of three buildings. The oldest is the two-story portion, which dates from between 1882 and 1888 and was built for M. H. Mackey & Sons Planing Mill. By 1909, the building served as a public market, and the one-story building at No. 1111 had been added. By 1932, the building was used as a garage, and the one-story building at 1117 had been added.



1129 9th Ave.

This one-story building was constructed about 1920 as a paint warehouse. The building has a concrete floor, brick walls, and a steel-truss roof. There is a corbeled cornice.

809-09-1/2 9th St.

This two-story, four-bay double house has a side-gable roof and asphalt shingles on the exterior. The picture windows on the first floor are probably alterations. The house was constructed before 1882, when it was owned by J. Good.

811-13 9th St.

This two-story brick building was constructed as a garage about 1910. The building has a parapeted front gable and a round-arched entrance.

820 12th St.

This three-story brick building has its original storefronts. The building was probably constructed between 1894 and 1909. The exterior brick is laid in a common bond. The roof is half hipped (on the corner), half gable. The windows on the upper floors have sixteen-over-one-light, double-hung sash; the lintels are molded at the second level and flat at the third.

807 14th St.

This two-story double house has a side-gable roof. The front of the building is clad with flush board siding, while the east side is covered with aluminum. There are picture windows on the first floor, and a pent roof over the first floor that is probably not original. The house was constructed before 1882, when it was owned by B. Padern.



## BUILDINGS SURVEYED IN FOURTH WARD AND LLYSWEN

Following are lists of buildings surveyed in the Fourth Ward and Llyswen. Basic information was collected and a 35mm photograph was taken of each building in the survey area. The information was entered on a dBase III Plus program, which was used to generate these lists. The lists use certain abbreviations, codes, and conventions, which are explained below.

Name: This is the historic name of the building, usually the name of the original owner. Original owners were determined only when additional research was undertaken. If there is an obvious present name, it is placed in parentheses.

Original and Present Use: The following codes have been used:

CA	commercial: automobile-related
CH	commercial: hotel
CO	commercial: office
CR	commercial: retail
CS	commercial: social organization
CW	commercial: warehouse
EC	ecclesiastical: church
EP	ecclesiastical: parish house, school
ER	ecclesiastical: residence
MR	mixed use: retail/residential
PP	public: police, fire
PS	public: school
PT	public: transportation
RM	residential: multi-family
RS	residential: single-family
UB	utility building
V	vacant

Exterior Material: The designation "+" signifies that more than one material is used prominently on the exterior. Abbreviations include:

conc.blk.	concrete block
woodh	horizontal wood siding
woods	wood shingles
woodv	vertical wood siding

Number of Stories: The designation "a" signifies a half-story.

Roof Shape: The following abbreviations are used:

gablec	cross gable (gables on front and side)
gablef	front gable (ridgeline perpendicular to street)
gablen	complex roofline, multiple gables
gables	side gable (ridgeline parallel to street)

Number of Units: This is the number of units that are easily visible, most easily defined by the number of doors on the first-floor front facade. The question here is one of original design intent--was it built as a double house, or a single house--not the nature of the living arrangements today.

Map: Construction dates were not determined precisely, but estimates were obtained using maps. The Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps, listed in the bibliography, indicate many buildings. The "Map" column lists the first map on which the building appears. Because the maps did not cover all of the survey areas in every edition, the fact that a building was not recorded on the previous map does not automatically mean that it did not exist at that time.



FOURTH WARD: BUILDINGS SURVEYED  
1989

Name		Address	Original Use	Present Use	Structural Material	Exterior Material	No. of Stories	Roof Shape	No. of Units	Built by this year
Theodore Roosevelt Junior High School	0	6 Ave & 14 St	PS	PS	steel/conc	brick	3	flat	1	1932
John and Annie Fearbeck House	1323	Eighth Ave	RS	RS	wood	brick	2a	gambrel	1	1909
	1325	Eighth Ave	RS	RS	wood	brick	2a	mansard	1	1909
	1327	Eighth Ave	RS	RS	wood	brick	2a	gable	1	1882
Samuel and Lettie McCarthy House(Gilden Barton FH)	1329	Eighth Ave	CO	CO	brick	brick	3	mansard	1	1894
St. James Church Office	1407	Eighth Ave	EP	EP	wood	brick	2a	hip	1	1909
	1409	Eighth Ave	RS	CO	wood	wood	2a	gable	1	1882
Steven's Mortuary	1421	Eighth Ave	CO	CO	brick	brick	2a	flat	1	1932
St. James G. E. Lutheran Church	1401 -05	Eighth Ave	EC	EC	brick	brick	2a	gable	1	1894
2nd Presbyterian Church (Cathedral of Christ)	1309 -15	Eighth Ave	EC	EC	brick	brick+	2	multi	1	1882
8th Ave. Methodist Episcopal Church (Faith United)	1227 -31	Eighth Ave	EC	EC	stone	stone	1a	multi	1	1882
	100	Fifteenth St	RS	RS	wood	woodh	2a	gable	1	1909
	101	Fifteenth St	RS	RS	wood	asphalt	2a	hip	1	1909
	102	Fifteenth St	RS	RS	wood	woodh	2a	gable	1	1909
	103	Fifteenth St	RS	RS	wood	aluminum	2a	gable	1	1909
	105	Fifteenth St	RS	RS	wood	woodh	2a	gable	1	1932
	107	Fifteenth St	RS	RS	wood	aluminum+	3	mansard	1	1894
	109	Fifteenth St	RS	RS	wood	asphalt	3	mansard	1	1894
	111	Fifteenth St	RS	RS	wood	asphalt	2a	gable	1	1894
	113	Fifteenth St	RS	RS	wood	aluminum	2a	gables	1	1894
	115	Fifteenth St	RS	RS	wood	aluminum	3	mansard	1	1894
Angus and Sarah L. Walton House	117	Fifteenth St	RS	RS	wood	woodh	3	mansard	1	1894
	119	Fifteenth St	RS	RS	wood	aluminum	2a	gables	1	1894
	201	Fifteenth St	RS	RS	wood	brick	2a	hip	1	1894

John and Emma Wright House I	203	Fifteenth St	RS	RS	wood	vinyl	2a	gables	1	1894
	205	Fifteenth St	RS	RS	wood	woodh	2a	gables	1	1894
	207	Fifteenth St	RS	RS	wood	aluminum	2a	gables	1	1894
	310	Fifteenth St	RS	RS	wood	brick	2a	gambrel	1	1932
	208 -1/2	Fifteenth St	RS	RS	wood	brick	2a	gable	2	1932
	210 -12	Fifteenth St	RS	RS	wood	vinyl	2	gable	1	1894
St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church	114 -16	Fifteenth St	RS	RS	wood	woodh	2a	gables	2	1909
	1401	Fifth Ave	EC	EC	brick	brick	1a	gable	1	1888
St. Mary's Rectory	1405	Fifth Ave	ER	ER	brick	brick	3	mansard	1	1909
Haller's Eagle Bakery	1206 -10	Fifth Ave	CR	CR	brick	brick	2a	flat	1	1909
Prospect Pool	0	First Ave	CS	CS	conc.blk.	conc.blk.	1	flat	0	1882
	1201	First Ave	RS	RS	wood	aluminum	2a	gable	1	1932
	1203	First Ave	RS	RS	wood	asphalt	2a	gable	1	1932
	1205	First Ave	RS	RS	wood	aluminum	2a	gambrel	1	1932
	1207	First Ave	RS	RS	wood	aluminum	2a	gable	1	1932
	1209	First Ave	RS	RS	wood	aluminum	2a	gable	1	1932
	1211	First Ave	RS	RS	wood	aluminum	2a	gables	1	1909
	1213	First Ave	RS	RS	wood	aluminum	2	gambrel	1	1932
	1215	First Ave	RS	RS	wood	aluminum	2a	gambrel	1	1932
	1219	First Ave	RS	RS	wood	asphalt	2a	gable	1	1909
	1223	First Ave	RS	RS	wood	aluminum	2a	gable	1	1909
	1225	First Ave	RS	RS	wood	aluminum+	2	gambrel	1	1932
	1227	First Ave	RS	RS	wood	asphalt+	2a	gambrel	1	1909
	1231	First Ave	RS	RS	wood	asbestos	2a	gable	1	1932
	1300	First Ave	RS	RS	wood	brick	2a	gambrel	1	1909
	1303	First Ave	RS	RS	wood	aluminum	2a	gable	1	1932
	1304	First Ave	RS	RS	wood	aluminum	2a	gables	1	1894
	1306	First Ave	RS	RS	wood	aluminum+	2a	gables	1	1909
	1306	First Ave	RS	RS		vinyl	2a	gambrel	1	1909
	1308	First Ave	RS	RS	wood	woodh	2a	gables	1	1894
	1309	First Ave	RS	RS	wood	woodh	2a	gables	1	1909
	1310	First Ave	RS	RS	wood	aluminum+	2a	gables	1	1894
	1311	First Ave	RS	RS	wood	brick+	2a	gambrel	1	1909
	1312	First Ave	RS	RS	wood	asbestos	2a	gable	1	1909
	1313	First Ave	RS	RS	wood	vinyl	2a	gable	1	1909
	1314	First Ave	RS	RS	wood	vinyl	2a	gable	1	1894
	1315	First Ave	RS	RS	wood	vinyl	2a	gables	1	1909
	1316	First Ave	RS	RS	wood	aluminum+	2a	gable	1	1894
	1317	First Ave	RS	RS	wood	aluminum	2a	gable	1	1909

	1318	First Ave	RS	RS	wood	aluminum+	2a	gablec	1	1894
	1319	First Ave	RS	RS	wood	vinyl	2a	gablec	1	1909
	1320	First Ave	RS	RS	wood	woodh	2a	gables	1	1909
	1322	First Ave	RS	RS	wood	aluminum	2a	gablec	1	1894
	1323	First Ave	RS	RS	wood	woodh	2a	gablec	1	1909
Jacob and Pauline Neher House	1325	First Ave	RS	RS	wood	woodh	2a	gambrel	1	1909
	1326	First Ave	RS	RS	wood	aluminum	2a	gables	1	1894
	1327	First Ave	RS	RS	wood	vinyl	2a	gablec	1	1909
	1327	First Ave	RS	RS	wood	woodh	2a	gables	1	1909
	1401	First Ave	RS	RS	wood	formstone	2a	gables	1	9999
	1404	First Ave	RS	RS	wood	aluminum	2a	gables	1	1894
	1405	First Ave	RS	RS	wood	aluminum	2a	gablec	1	1909
	1406	First Ave	RS	RS	wood	vinyl+	2a	gables	1	1894
	1407	First Ave	RS	RS	wood	aluminum	2a	gablec	1	1909
	1408	First Ave	RS	RS	wood	aluminum	2a	gables	1	1894
	1409	First Ave	RS	RS	wood	asbestos	2a	gables	1	1909
	1409	First Ave	RS	RS	wood	asbestos	2a	gables	1	1909
	1409	First Ave		RS	wood	asphalt	1a	gables	1	1909
	1410	First Ave	RS	RS	wood	aluminum	2a	gablec	1	1909
	1411	First Ave	RS	RS	wood	aluminum	2a	gables	1	1909
	1412	First Ave	RS	RS	wood	asphalt	2a	gablec	1	1909
	1413	First Ave	RS	RS	wood	vinyl	2a	gables	1	1909
	1414	First Ave	RS	RS	wood	aluminum+	2a	gables	1	1894
	1414	First Ave	RS	RS	wood	aluminum+	2a	gables	1	1894
	1415	First Ave	RS	RS	wood	vinyl	2a	gablec	1	1909
	1415	First Ave		RS	wood	aluminum	2	gables	1	1909
	1416	First Ave	RS	RS	wood	brick	2a	gables	1	1894
	1417	First Ave	RS	RS	wood	aluminum	2a	gables	1	1909
	1418	First Ave	RS	RS	wood	vinyl	2a	gables	1	1894
	1419	First Ave	RS	RS	wood	vinyl	2a	gables	1	1909
	1420	First Ave	RS	RS	wood	aluminum	2a	gables	1	1894
	1421	First Ave	RS	RS	wood	woodh	2a	gables	1	1909
	1422	First Ave	RS	RS	wood	wood+	2a	gables	1	1894
	1423	First Ave	RS	RS	1909	woodh	2a	gables	1	1909
	1424	First Ave	RS	RS	wood	vinyl	2a	gablec	1	1909
	1425	First Ave	RS	RS	wood	woodh	2a	gables	2	1909
	1426	First Ave	RS	RS	wood	vinyl	2a	gablec	1	1909
	1503	First Ave	CA	CA	metal	metal	1a	gables	1	9999
	1506	First Ave	RS	RS	wood	aluminum	2	hip	1	1909

John M. and Martha S. Filer House	1507	First Ave	RS	RS	wood	vinyl	2a	gablec	1	1909
	1508	First Ave	RS	RS	wood	asphalt+	2a	gablec	1	1909
	1509	First Ave	RS	RS	wood	formstone+	2a	gables	1	1909
	1510	First Ave	RS	RS	wood	aluminum	2a	gables	1	1909
	1511	First Ave	RS	RS	wood	brick	2a	hip	1	1909
	1512	First Ave	RS	RS	wood	vinyl	2a	gablec	1	1909
	1513	First Ave	RS	RS	wood	woodh	2a	gables	1	1909
	1514	First Ave	RS	RS	wood	asphalt+	2a	gablec	1	1909
	1515	First Ave	RS	RS	wood	aluminum	2a	gablec	1	1909
	1516	First Ave	RS	RS	wood	asphalt+	2a	gambrel f	1	1932
	1517	First Ave	RS	RS	wood	woodh	2a	gablec	1	1909
	1518	First Ave	RS	RS	wood	asphalt	2a	gables	1	1909
	1519	First Ave	RS	RS	wood	wood	2a	gablec	1	1909
	1520	First Ave	RS	RS	wood	vinyl	2a	gablec	1	1909
	1521	First Ave	RS	RS	wood	aluminum	2a	gables	1	1909
	1522	First Ave	RS	RS	wood	aluminum	2a	gables	1	1909
	1523	First Ave	RS	RS	wood	brick	2a	gables	1	1909
	1524	First Ave	RS	RS	wood	vinyl	2a	gables	1	1909
	1525	First Ave	RS	RS	wood	vinyl	2a	gables	1	1909
	1526	First Ave	RS	RS	wood	vinyl	2a	gables	1	1909
	1527	First Ave	RS	RS	wood	wood+	2a	gablec	1	1909
	1528	First Ave	RS	RS	wood	asphalt	2a	gables	1	1909
	1529	First Ave	RS	RS	wood	woodh	1a	gablef+	1	1932
	1530	First Ave	RS	RS	wood	aluminum	2a	gables	1	1909
	1531	First Ave	RS	RS	wood	brick	2a	gablec	1	1909
	1532	First Ave	RS	RS	wood	asbestos+	2a	gablec	1	1909
	1533	First Ave	RS	RS	wood	vinyl	2a	gables	1	1909
	1534	First Ave	RS	RS	wood	woodh	2a	gables	1	1909
	1535	First Ave	RS	RS	wood	aluminum	2a	gables	1	1909
	1536	First Ave	RS	RS	wood	asphalt	2a	gables	1	1909
	1537	First Ave	RS	RS	wood	aluminum	2a	gables	1	1909
	1539	First Ave	RS	RS	wood	aluminum	2a	gables	1	1909
	1541	First Ave	RS	RS	wood	woodh	2a	gablec	2	1932
	1305 -07	First Ave	RS	RS	wood	vinyl+	1a	gables	3	1909
	1429 -31	First Ave	RS	RS	wood	brick	2a	gables	3	1932
	1529	First Ave rear	CA	CA		aluminum	2	shed	0	1932
	102	Fourteenth St	RS	RS	wood	aluminum	2a	gablef	1	1932
	103	Fourteenth St	RS	RS	wood	aluminum	2a	gablec	1	1909
	107	Fourteenth St	RS	RS	wood	aluminum	2a	gablec	1	1909

Xavier (Frank X.) Putz House	208	Fourteenth St	RS	RS	wood	aluminum	2a	gables	1	1894
	209	Fourteenth St	RS	RS	wood	asphalt	2	gables	1	1894
	309	Fourteenth St	RS	RS	wood	woodh	2a	gables	1	9999
	313	Fourteenth St	RS	RS	wood	vinyl+	2a	gablec	1	1932
	315	Fourteenth St	RS	RS	wood	woodh	2a	gables	1	9999
	807	Fourteenth St	RS	CO	wood	aluminum+	2a	gables	1	1882
Phillip Kimmel House	104 -06	Fourteenth St	RS	RS	brick	brick	2a	gables	2	1894
	311 -1/2	Fourteenth St	RS	RS	wood	aluminum	2a	gablec	2	1932
Ludwig and Frances Leix House	210 -12	Fourteenth St	RS	RS	wood	wood	2a	gablec	2	1909
II										
Charles D. Mason House	1201	Fourth Ave	RS	RS	wood	woodh+	2a	gables	1	1882
	1203	Fourth Ave	RS	RS	wood	wood	2a	gablef	1	1894
	1205	Fourth Ave	RS	RS	wood	woodh	2a	gables	1	1882
	1209	Fourth Ave	RS	RS	wood	brick	2a	gablec	1	1894
	1211	Fourth Ave	RS	RS	wood	woodh	2a	gablec	1	1909
	1213	Fourth Ave	RS	RS	wood	brick	2a	gablec	1	1894
Cloyd Kerlin House	1219	Fourth Ave	RS	RS	wood	asphalt	2a	gables	1	1882
	1221	Fourth Ave	RS	RS	wood	woodh	2a	gablec	1	1882
	1227	Fourth Ave	RS	RS	wood	aluminum	2a	gables	1	1888
	1228	Fourth Ave	RS	RS	wood	woodh	2a	gambrel f	1	
	1229	Fourth Ave	RS	RS	wood	woodh	2a	gablec	1	1894
	1231	Fourth Ave	RS	RS	wood	aluminum	2a	gablec	1	1882
	1307	Fourth Ave	RS	RS	wood	vinyl	wa	gablef	1	1882
	1309	Fourth Ave	RS	RS	wood	aluminum	2a	gablef	1	1932
	1311	Fourth Ave	RS	RS	wood	asbestos	2a	gablec	1	1932
	1313	Fourth Ave	RS	RS	wood	aluminum	2a	gablef	1	1882
	1317	Fourth Ave	RS	RS	wood	asphalt	2a	gables	1	1882
	1321	Fourth Ave	RS	RS	wood	woodh	2a	gables	1	1882
	1323	Fourth Ave	RS	RS	wood	asphalt+	2a	gablec	1	1894
	1327	Fourth Ave	RS	RS	wood	aluminum+	2	gablef	1	1932
Joseph and Barbara Fleig House	1329	Fourth Ave	RS	RS	wood	brick	2a	gablef	1	1894
St. Mary's School	1400	Fourth Ave	EP	EP	brick	brick	3	flat	1	1894
St. Mary's Convent	1408	Fourth Ave	ER	ER	brick	brick	3	mansard	1	1932
St. Mary's Memorial Hall	1420	Fourth Ave	EP	EP	brick	brick	2	flat	1	1961
	1425	Fourth Ave	RS	RS	wood	aluminum	2a	gablec	1	1882
	1427	Fourth Ave	RS	RS	wood	aluminum	wa	gables	1	1882
Alfred Bentley House	1509	Fourth Ave	RS	RS	wood	aluminum	2a	gablef	1	1932
	1511	Fourth Ave	RS	RS	wood	asphalt	2a	gables	1	1932
	1513	Fourth Ave	RS	RS	wood	woodh	2a	gablef	1	1932
	1515	Fourth Ave	RS	RS	wood	woodh	2a	gables	1	1932



	1517	Fourth Ave	RS	RS	wood	vinyl	2a	gablef	1	1932
	1519	Fourth Ave	RS	RS	wood	asphalt+	2a	gablec	1	1932
	1521	Fourth Ave	RS	RS	wood	vinyl	2a	gables	1	1882
	1523	Fourth Ave	RS	RS	wood	asphalt+	2a	gablef	1	1932
	1525	Fourth Ave	RS	RS	wood	woodh	2a	gablec	1	1894
	1527	Fourth Ave	RS	RS	wood	vinyl	2a	gablec	1	1894
	1529	Fourth Ave	RS	RS	wood	aluminum	2a	gablef	1	1894
Martin Asbury Green House (Belmar Hotel)	1501 -03	Fourth Ave	CR	CR	wood	brick+	2a	gables	1	1932
Union Brewery Stable	1425 -1/2	Fourth Ave	CR	V	wood	brick	2a	gablec	1	1894
	1429 -31	Fourth Ave	MR	MR	wood	brick	2	flat	1	1932
	1200	Second Ave	RS	RS	wood	aluminum	1	gables	1	9999
	1208	Second Ave	RS	RS	wood	vinyl	2a	gablec	1	1909
	1210	Second Ave	RS	RS	wood	aluminum	2a	gablec	1	1909
	1212	Second Ave	RS	RS	wood	aluminum	2a	gables	1	1909
	1214	Second Ave	RS	RS	wood	woodh	2a	gables	1	1909
	1218	Second Ave	RS	RS	wood	woodh	2a	gables	1	1909
	1220	Second Ave	RS	RS	wood	aluminum	2a	gables	1	1909
Annie and George Renner House	1222	Second Ave	RS	RS	wood	woodh	2a	gables	1	1909
Henry Schmitt Grocery Store (I & K Grocery)	1224	Second Ave	RS	RS	wood	brick	2	flat	2	1909
	1226	Second Ave	RS	RS	wood	woodh	2a	gables	1	1909
	1300	Second Ave	RS	RS	wood	aluminum	2a	gables	1	1894
	1302	Second Ave	RS	RS	wood	woodh	2a	gables	1	1894
	1304	Second Ave	RS	RS	wood	aluminum	2a	gables	1	1882
	1305	Second Ave	RS	RS	wood	vinyl	2a	gablef	1	1894
	1306	Second Ave	RS	RS	wood	aluminum	2a	gablec	1	1894
	1307	Second Ave	RS	RS	wood	woodh+	2	gablef	1	1894
	1308	Second Ave	RS	RS	wood	woodh	2a	gables	1	1882
	1309	Second Ave	RS	RS	wood	asbestos+	2a	gables	1	1894
	1310	Second Ave	RS	RS	wood	woodh	2a	gablec	1	1909
	1311	Second Ave	RS	RS	wood	asbestos+	2a	gables	1	1894
	1312	Second Ave	RS	RS	wood	aluminum	2a	gables	1	1894
	1314	Second Ave	RS	RS	wood	asphalt	2a	gables	1	1894
	1316	Second Ave	RS	RS	wood	asphalt+	2a	gables	1	1894
	1317	Second Ave	RS	RS	wood	aluminum	2a	gables	1	1894
	1318	Second Ave	RS	RS	wood	vinyl	2a	gables	1	1894
	1319	Second Ave	RS	RS	wood	aluminum	2a	gables	1	1894
	1320	Second Ave	RS	RS	wood	brick	2a	gablec	0	1894
	1321	Second Ave	RS	RS	wood	vinyl	2a	gablec	1	1909

	1322	Second Ave	RS	RS	wood	aluminum	2a	gables	1	1894
	1323	Second Ave	RS	RS	wood	woodh	2a	gables	1	1894
	1324	Second Ave	RS	RS	wood	wood+	2a	gables	1	1882
	1325	Second Ave	RS	RS	wood	woodh	2a	gables	1	1894
	1326	Second Ave	RS	RS	wood	woodh	2a	gablec	1	1909
	1327	Second Ave	RS	RS	wood	asphalt	2a	gablec	1	1894
	1328	Second Ave	RS	RS	wood	aluminum	2a	gables	1	1894
	1330	Second Ave	RS	RS	wood	vinyl	2a	gablec	1	1894
Lawrence, Jr. and Caroline Long Kimmel House	1331	Second Ave	RS	RS	wood	brick	2a	multi	1	1894
	1400	Second Ave	RS	RS	wood	aluminum	2a	gables	1	1894
	1402	Second Ave	RS	RS	wood	brick	2a	gables	1	1932
	1403	Second Ave	RS	RS	wood	brick	3	mansard	1	1894
Bertha and Joseph Zierer House	1404	Second Ave	RS	RS	wood	brick	2a	hip	1	1882
	1405	Second Ave	RS	RS	wood	aluminum	2a	gablec	1	1894
	1406	Second Ave	RS	RS	wood	aluminum	2a	gables	1	1894
	1407	Second Ave	RS	RS	wood	aluminum	2a	gables	1	1894
	1408	Second Ave	RS	RS	wood	brick	2a	gables	1	1894
	1409	Second Ave	RS	RS	wood	asphalt+	2a	gables	1	1894
	1410	Second Ave	RS	RS	wood	aluminum	2	gablec	1	1894
	1411	Second Ave	RS	RS	wood	brick	2a	gablec	1	1909
	1412	Second Ave	RS	RS	wood	vinyl	2a	gables	1	1894
	1413	Second Ave	RS	RS	wood	brick	2a	gables	1	1932
	1413	Second Ave	RS	RS	wood	aluminum	2a	gables	1	1882
	1414	Second Ave	RS	RS	wood	brick	2a	gablec	1	1894
	1416	Second Ave	RS	RS	wood	brick	2a	gambrel f	1	1894
	1417	Second Ave	RS	RS	wood	brick	2a	gables	1	1932
	1418	Second Ave	RS	RS	wood	brick	2a	gables	1	1894
	1419	Second Ave	RS	RS	wood	woodh	2a	gablec	1	1894
	1420	Second Ave	RS	RS	wood	aluminum	2a	gables	1	1894
	1421	Second Ave	RS	RS	wood	woodh	2a	gablec	1	1909
	1422	Second Ave	RS	RS	wood	woodh	2a	gables	1	1894
	1424	Second Ave	RS	RS	wood	wood	2	gables+	1	1894
	1425	Second Ave	RS	RS	wood	woodh	2a	gables	1	1894
James and Mary Scherdon House	1426	Second Ave	RS	RS	wood	woodh	2a	gablef	1	1894
	1427	Second Ave	RS	RS	wood	woodh	2a	gablec	1	1894
	1429	Second Ave	RS	RS	wood	vinyl	2a	gables	1	1909
	1430	Second Ave	RS	RS	wood	brick	3	mansard	0	1894
John and Emma Wright House II	1506	Second Ave	RS	RS	wood	woodh	2a	gables	1	1932

Frank L. and Ella Williams House	1508	Second Ave	RS	RS	wood	woodh	2a	gables	1	1909
	1509	Second Ave	RS	RS	wood	woodh	2a	gablec	1	1909
	1510	Second Ave	RS	RS	wood	aluminum	2a	gables	1	1894
	1511	Second Ave	RS	RS	wood	woodh	2a	gables	1	1894
	1512	Second Ave	RS	RS	wood	vinyl	2	gables	1	1909
	1513	Second Ave	RS	RS	wood	aluminum	2a	gambrelf	1	1932
	1514	Second Ave	RS	RS	wood	aluminum	1a	gablef	1	1932
	1515	Second Ave	RS	RS	wood	asphalt	2a	gambrelf	1	1932
	1516	Second Ave	RS	RS	wood	vinyl	2a	gablec	1	1932
	1517	Second Ave	RS	RS	wood	asphalt	2a	gambrelf	1	1932
Elizabeth and Blair Ward House	1518	Second Ave	RS	RS	wood	wood	2a	gablec	1	1932
	1519	Second Ave	RS	RS	wood	asphalt+	2a	gambrelf	1	1932
	1520	Second Ave	RS	RS	wood	vinyl	2a	gables	1	1932
	1521	Second Ave	RS	RS	wood	woodh	2a	gambrelf	1	1932
	1522	Second Ave	RS	RS	wood	brick	2a	gablec	1	1932
	1523	Second Ave	RS	RS	wood	brick	2a	gambrelf	1	1932
	1524	Second Ave	CR	CO	wood	brick	2	flat	1	1909
	1525	Second Ave	RS	RS	wood	aluminum	1a	gables	1	1932
	1526	Second Ave	RS	RS	wood	brick	2	gambrelf	1	1932
	1527	Second Ave	RS	RS	wood	brick	2a	hip	1	1932
Maennerchor Singing Society Hall	1528	Second Ave	RS	RS	wood	brick	2a	gambrelf	1	1909
	1529~	Second Ave	RS	RS	wood	brick	2a	gambrelf	1	1932
	1531	Second Ave	RS	RS	wood	brick	2a	hip	1	1932
	1532	Second Ave	RS	RS	wood	brick	2a	gambrelf	1	1909
	1533	Second Ave	RS	RS	wood	woodh+	2a	gablec	1	1932
	1537	Second Ave	RS	RS	wood	brick	2a	hip	1	1932
	1301 -03	Second Ave	RS	RS	wood	aluminum	2a	gablec	2	1894
	1313 -15	Second Ave	EC	RS	wood	aluminum	2a	gablef	2	1894
	1216	Seventh Ave	RS	RS	wood	aluminum	2a	gables	1	1882
	1222	Seventh Ave	RS	RS	wood	aluminum+	2a	gables	1	1882
Jacob Good House	1231	Seventh Ave	RS	RS	wood	asphalt	2a	gables	1	1882
	1225 -27	Seventh Ave	RS	RS	wood	brick	2a	gambrels	3	1882
	106	Sixteenth St	RS	RS	wood	asphalt+	2a	gables	1	1909
Peter Pielmeier Blacksmith Shop (Beahm's Garage)	108	Sixteenth St	RS	RS	wood	asphalt+	2a	gables	1	1909
	208	Sixteenth St	RS	RS	wood	brick+	2	gablef	1	9999
	104 -06	Sixteenth St	RS	RS	wood	asphalt	2a	gables	2	1909
	306 -08	Sixteenth St	RS	RS	wood	aluminum+	2a	gables	2	1932

	110 -12	Sixteenth St	RS	RS	wood	aluminum+	2a	gables	2	1932
Joseph and Sara Nixon House	1204	Sixth Ave	RS	CR	brick	brick	3	mansard	1	1888
	1205	Sixth Ave	RS	RS	brick	brick	2a	gablec	1	1932
	1207	Sixth Ave	RS	RS	brick	brick	2a	gambrels	1	1932
	1217	Sixth Ave	RS	CO	wood	aluminum	2a	gables	1	1882
	1219	Sixth Ave	RS	RS	wood	aluminum	2a	gables	1	1882
John and Ellen Eirhart House	1220	Sixth Ave	RS	RS	wood	woodh	2a	gablec	1	1882
	1224	Sixth Ave	RS	RS	wood	brick	2a	gambrel f	1	1909
	1225	Sixth Ave	RM	RM	wood	brick	3	gambrel f	1	1932
	1226	Sixth Ave	RS	RS	wood	asphalt	2a	gables	1	1909
	1227	Sixth Ave	RS	RS	wood	brick	2a	gables	1	1932
	1230	Sixth Ave	RS	RS	wood	brick	2a	hip	1	1909
Goodwill Fire-Engine and Hose Co.(Firehouse Foods)	1231	Sixth Ave	PP	CR	brick	brick	2a	gable f	1	1888
(Nicolima's Varsity Lounge)	1200 -02	Sixth Ave	CH	CH	wood	brick+	2a	gambrel c	1	1909
	1201 -03	Sixth Ave	RS	RS	wood	brick	1a	gables	1	1932
	1206 -08	Sixth Ave	RS	RS	wood	vinyl+	2a	gables	2	1882
	1212 -14	Sixth Ave	RS	RS	wood	brick	2a	gables	1	1932
Altoona School District Power Plant	1413 1431	Sixth Ave	UB	UB		brick		flat	1	
Altoona Area High School Annex	0	Sixth Ave & 14 St.	PS	PS	steel/conc	brick	3	flat	1	1932
John H. Westley House	1200	Third Ave	RS	RS	wood	woodh	2a	gables	1	1882
	1201	Third Ave	RS	RS	wood	asphalt	2a	gables	1	1882
	1202	Third Ave	RS	RS	wood	brick	2a	hip	1	1932
	1205	Third Ave	RS	RS	wood	brick	wa	gablec	1	1909
	1206	Third Ave	RS	RS	wood	vinyl	3a	multi	1	1882
	1207	Third Ave	RS	RS	wood	vinyl	2a	gable f	1	1909
	1209	Third Ave	RS	RS	wood	aluminum	2a	gables	1	1909
	1210	Third Ave	RS	RS	wood	woodh	2a	gablec	1	1882
	1211	Third Ave	RS	RS	wood	aluminum	2a	gablec	1	1909
	1212	Third Ave	RS	RS	wood	asbestos	2a	gables	1	1882
John and Ellie Bush House	1214	Third Ave	RS	RS	wood	wood+	2a	gables	1	1882
	1217	Third Ave	RS	RS	wood	vinyl	2a	gables	1	1932
	1218	Third Ave	RS	RS	wood	vinyl	2a	gambrel f	1	1894
	1219	Third Ave	RS	RS	wood	asphalt	2a	gables	1	1909
	1220	Third Ave	RS	RS	wood	wood+	2a	gablec	1	1909
	1221	Third Ave	RS	RS	wood	brick+	2	gambrel f	1	1909
	1222	Third Ave	RS	RS	wood	woodh	2a	gables	1	1888
	1223	Third Ave	RS	RS	wood	brick+	2	gambrel f	1	1932

	1224	Third Ave	RS	RS	wood	asphalt	2a	gablec	1	1888
	1225	Third Ave	RS	RS	wood	asphalt	2a	gablec	1	1882
	1226	Third Ave	RS	RS	wood	aluminum	2a	gables	1	1888
	1227	Third Ave	RS	RS	wood	asphalt+	2a	gables	1	1882
	1228	Third Ave	RS	RS	wood	asphalt+	2a	gables	1	1888
	1230	Third Ave	RS	RS	wood	woodh	2a	gables	1	1888
Thomas M. and Catherine Lyman House	1300	Third Ave	RS	RS	wood	brick	2a	gablec	1	1888
	1301	Third Ave	RS	RS	wood	aluminum	2a	gables	1	1894
	1302	Third Ave	RS	RS	wood	woodh	2a	gables	1	1888
	1303	Third Ave	RS	RS	wood	vinyl	2	gablec	1	1894
	1304	Third Ave	RS	RS	wood	brick	2a	gablec	1	1888
	1306	Third Ave	RS	RS	wood	woodh	2a	gables	1	1888
	1307	Third Ave	RS	RS	wood	aluminum	1	gables	1	1968
E. C. Howarth House	1308	Third Ave	RS	RS	wood	woodh	2a	gables	1	1888
	1310	Third Ave	RS	RS	wood	asphalt	2a	gables	1	1888
	1311	Third Ave	RS	RS	wood	asphalt	2a	gablec	1	1909
	1312	Third Ave	RS	RS	wood	asphalt	2a	gablec	1	1888
	1313	Third Ave	RS	RS	wood	asphalt	3	mansard	1	1894
	1314	Third Ave	RS	RS	wood	wood	2a	gablec	1	1882
	1315	Third Ave	RS	RS	wood	woodh	2a	gables	1	1894
	1316	Third Ave	RS	RS	wood	brick+	2a	gables	1	1882
	1317	Third Ave	RS	RS	wood	aluminum+	2a	gablef	1	1882
	1318	Third Ave	RS	RS	wood	brick	2a	gablef	1	1882
	1319	Third Ave	RS	RS	wood	asbestos	2a	gablec	1	1894
	1320	Third Ave	RS	RS	wood	brick	2a	gables	1	1932
	1321	Third Ave	RS	RS	wood	aluminum	2a	gablec	1	1882
	1322	Third Ave	CR	CR	conc.blk.	conc.blk.	1	gablef	1	9999
	1323	Third Ave	RS	RS	wood	aluminum	2	gablef	1	1909
Theophilus Schraff House	1327	Third Ave	RS	RS	wood	asphalt	2a	gambrel f	1	1882
Ludwig and Frances Leix House	1329	Third Ave	RS	RS	wood	brick	2a	gables	1	1882
I										
	1400	Third Ave	RS	RS	wood	woodh	2a	gambrel f	1	1894
	1401	Third Ave	RS	RS	wood	aluminum	2a	gables	1	1894
	1404	Third Ave	RS	RS	wood	aluminum	2a	gablef	1	1894
	1405	Third Ave	RS	RS	wood	vinyl	2	gablef	1	1882
	1406	Third Ave	RS	RS	wood	asbestos	2a	gables	1	1882
	1407	Third Ave	RS	RS	wood	aluminum	2	gables	1	1882
	1408	Third Ave	RS	RS	wood	aluminum	2a	gables	1	1894
	1409	Third Ave	RS	RS	wood	aluminum	2a	gables	1	1894



Timothy and Mary C. Healy  
House

1410	Third Ave	RS	RS	wood	asphalt	2a	gables	1	1894
1411	Third Ave	RS	RS	wood	woodh	2a	gablec	1	1894
1412	Third Ave	RS	RS	wood	vinyl+	2a	gables	1	1882
1413	Third Ave	RS	RS	wood	woodh	2a	gablec	1	1894
1415	Third Ave	RS	RS	wood	woodh	2a	gablec	1	1909
1417	Third Ave	RS	RS	wood	vinyl	2a	gables	1	1894
1418	Third Ave	RS	RS	wood	brick+	1a	gambrelf	1	1932
1419	Third Ave	RS	RS	wood	vinyl+	2a	gables	1	1894
1420	Third Ave	RS	RS	wood	brick	2a	gambrelf	1	1882
1421	Third Ave	RS	RS	wood	woodh	2a	gables	1	1909
1422	Third Ave	RS	RS	wood	woodh	2a	gables	1	1894
1423	Third Ave	RS	RS	wood	brick	3	mansard	1	1882
1424	Third Ave	RS	RS	wood	woodh	2a	hip	1	1882
1426	Third Ave	RS	RS	wood	asphalt	2a	gables	1	1882
1428	Third Ave	RS	RS	wood	woodh	2a	gables	1	1882
1429	Third Ave	RS	RS	wood	woodh	2a	gablec	1	1894
1430	Third Ave	RS	RS	wood	formstone+	2a	gables	1	1882
1500	Third Ave	RS	RS	wood	aluminum	2a	gables	1	1932
1501	Third Ave	RS	RS	wood	vinyl	2a	gablec	1	1909
1502	Third Ave	RS	RS	wood	woodh	2a	gables	1	1932
1503	Third Ave	RS	RS	wood	aluminum	3	mansard	1	1894
1504	Third Ave	RS	RS	wood	woodh	2a	gablec	1	1932
1505	Third Ave	RS	RS	wood	aluminum	2a	gables	1	1894
1506	Third Ave	RS	RS	wood	woodh	2a	hip	1	1882
1507	Third Ave	RS	RS	wood	aluminum	2a	gables	1	1894
1508	Third Ave	RS	RS	wood	brick	2a	gablec	1	1932
1509	Third Ave	RS	RS	wood	aluminum	2a	gables	1	1894
1510	Third Ave	RS	RS	wood	vinyl+	2a	gables	1	1882
1511	Third Ave	RS	RS	wood	woodh	2a	gables	1	1894
1513	Third Ave	RS	RS	wood	vinyl	2a	gables	1	1894
1514	Third Ave	RS	RS	wood	brick	2a	gablec	1	1932
1515	Third Ave	RS	RS	wood	aluminum	2a	gables	1	1894
1516	Third Ave	RS	RS	wood	vinyl	2a	gablec	1	1932
1517	Third Ave	RS	RS	wood	vinyl	2a	gables	1	1894
1518	Third Ave	RS	RS	wood	vinyl	2a	gablec	1	1932
1519	Third Ave	RS	RS	wood	woodh	2a	gables	1	1909
1521	Third Ave	RS	RS	wood	asbestos	2a	gables	1	1894
1523	Third Ave	RS	RS	wood	aluminum	2a	gablec	1	1894
1524	Third Ave	RS	RS	wood	aluminum	2a	gablef	1	1882

	1525	Third Ave	RS	RS	wood	wood	2a	gablec	1	1894
	1526	Third Ave	RS	RS	wood	aluminum	2a	gambrelf	1	1882
	1527	Third Ave	RS	RS	wood	vinyl	2a	gablec	1	1894
	1528	Third Ave	RS	RS	wood	aluminum+	2a	gablec	1	1932
	1529	Third Ave	RS	RS	wood	aluminum	2a	gablec	1	1894
	1530	Third Ave	RS	RS	wood	woodh	2a	gablec	1	1932
	1531	Third Ave	RS	RS	wood	vinyl	2a	gablec	1	1894
	1532	Third Ave	RS	RS	wood	asphalt	2a	gablec	1	1932
	1416 -1/2	Third Ave	RS	RS	wood	aluminum	2a	gables	1	1882
	1431 -1/2	Third Ave	RS	RS	wood	asphalt+	2a	gablec	1	1894
(Roto Rooter)	1533 -35	Third Ave	RS	RS	wood	vinyl	2	gablef	2	1951
	107	Thirteenth St	RS	RS	wood	brick	2a	gablec	1	1932
	109	Thirteenth St	RS	RS	wood	brick	2a	gablec	1	1932
Charles R. and Lettie L. Bell House	200	Thirteenth St	RS	RS	wood	woodh	2a	gablec	1	1909
	204	Thirteenth St	RS	RS	wood	woodh	2a	gablec	1	1909
	206	Thirteenth St	RS	RS	wood	asbestos	2a	gables	1	1909
	209	Thirteenth St	RS	RS	wood	aluminum	2	gablef	1	1909
	210	Thirteenth St	RS	RS	wood	vinyl	2a	gablec	1	1909
	211	Thirteenth St	RS	RS	wood	woodh	2a	gables	1	1909
	309	Thirteenth St	RS	RS	wood	brick	2a	gablec	1	1932
	310	Thirteenth St	RS	RS	wood	woodv	2a	gables	1	1932
	311	Thirteenth St	RS	RS	wood	aluminum	2a	gablec	1	9999
	306 -08	Thirteenth St	RS	RS	wood	aluminum	2a	gables	2	1932
	606 -08	Thirteenth St	RS	RS	wood	brick	2a	gables	2	1932
	111 -13	Thirteenth St	RS	RS	wood	aluminum	2a	gablec	2	1909
	309	Twelfth St	CR	CR	wood	wood	1	gablef	1	1932
	311	Twelfth St	RS	RS	wood	aluminum+	2a	gablef	1	1909
(Holsum Budget Bakery Outlet)	511	Twelfth St	CR	CR	brick	brick	1	hip	1	9999
(Puronto's)	705 -09	Twelfth St	CR	CR	wood	woodv+	1	flat	2	9999
William T. McConnell House	211 -13	Twelfth St	RS	RS	wood	woodh	2a	hip	2	1909
(Altoona Office Equipment)	711 -15	Twelfth St	CR	CR	brick	brick	1	gablef+	1	9999

LLYSWEN: BUILDINGS SURVEYED  
1989

Name		Address	Original Use	Present Use	Structural Material	Exterior Material	No. of Stories	Roof Shape	No. of Units	Built by this year
Jacob E. and Mintie Miller House I	107	Browning Ave	RS	RS	wood	vinyl	1a	pyramid	1	1932
	109	Browning Ave	RS	RS	wood	woodh+	1a	gambrel	1	1932
	201	Browning Ave	RS	RS	wood	woodh	1	gablef	1	1932
	203	Browning Ave	RS	RS	wood	aluminum	2	gables	1	1932
	204	Browning Ave	RS	RS	wood	brick+	1	gables	1	1932
	205	Browning Ave	RS	RS	wood	brick+	1	gables	1	1932
	206	Browning Ave	RS	RS	wood	woodh	1a	gables	1	1932
Joseph and Mary Ann Lamont House	208	Browning Ave	RS	RS	wood	woodh	1	gables	1	9999
	209	Browning Ave	RS	RS	wood	brick	1a	gablef	1	1951
	211	Browning Ave	RS	RS	wood	woodh	1	gablef	1	1932
	301	Browning Ave	RS	RS	wood	woodh+	1a	gambrelc	1	1932
	313	Browning Ave	RS	RS	wood	vinyl	1	gables	1	9999
	315	Browning Ave	RS	RS	wood	brick+	1	gables	1	9999
	317	Browning Ave	RS	RS	9999	corrigated	1	gables	1	9999
	319	Browning Ave	RS	RS	wood	aluminum	1	gables	1	9999
	321	Browning Ave	RS	RS	9999	woodh	1	gables	1	9999
Harry and Harriet Bott House	100	Coleridge Ave	RS	RS	wood	woodh	2	hip	1	1909
Ward Ave Presbyterian Church Parsonage	101	Coleridge Ave	RS	RS	wood	brick	2	hip	1	1920
	103	Coleridge Ave	RS	RS	wood	brick	2	multi	1	1920
E. A. Jr., and Marguerite Caum House	104	Coleridge Ave	RS	RS	wood	brick+	1a	gambrels	1	1920
	106	Coleridge Ave	RS	RS	wood	woodh	1	gables	1	1909
	107	Coleridge Ave	RS	RS	wood	vinyl+	1a	gables	1	1920
	108	Coleridge Ave	RS	RS	wood	aluminum	1a	gables	1	1909
Robert H. and Patty Fay House	109	Coleridge Ave	RS	RS	wood	woodh+	1a	multi	1	1920
	110	Coleridge Ave	RS	RS	wood	woodh	2	gables	1	1909
	112	Coleridge Ave	RS	RS	wood	vinyl	1	hip	1	1920
John M. and Minnie Baird House	200	Coleridge Ave	RS	RS	wood	woodh	2	hip	1	1909

Franklin G. and Josephine Krall House	201	Coleridge Ave	RS	RS	wood	brick+	2	multi	1	1909
Jacob and Mintie Miller House II	202	Coleridge Ave	RS	RS	wood	woodh	1a	gables	1	1932
	203	Coleridge Ave	RS	RS	wood	woodh	1a	gables	1	1920
John S. Seeds House	204	Coleridge Ave	RS	RS	wood	brick+	1a	gables	1	1932
	205	Coleridge Ave	RS	RS	wood	aluminum	1a	gables	1	1920
	206	Coleridge Ave	RS	RS	wood	aluminum	2	gables	1	1920
	207	Coleridge Ave	RS	RS	wood	aluminum	2a	hip	1	1920
Corl's Store	208	Coleridge Ave	RS	RM	wood	vinyl	2	multi	2	1920
David G. and Margaret Stewart House	209	Coleridge Ave	RS	RS	wood	woodh	2a	hip	1	1909
	210	Coleridge Ave	RS	RS	wood	vinyl	2	gablef	1	1909
	211	Coleridge Ave	RS	RS	wood	stucco+	1a	hip	1	1920
	212	Coleridge Ave	RS	RS	wood	woodh	2	gablef	1	1920
	214	Coleridge Ave	RS	RS	wood	woodh	2	hip	1	1909
	215	Coleridge Ave	RS	RS	wood	brick+	1a	gables	1	1932
William and Della Haines House	216	Coleridge Ave	RS	RS	wood	stone	1a	gables	1	9999
	217	Coleridge Ave	RS	RS	wood	brick	1a	gables	1	1932
Sylvester and Margaret England House	300	Coleridge Ave	RS	RS	wood	brick	2a	gablec	1	1909
	301	Coleridge Ave	RS	RS	wood	brick+	1a	gables	1	1932
Frank L. Zimmerman House	303	Coleridge Ave	RS	RS	wood	brick	2a	gambrel	1	1920
	304	Coleridge Ave	RS	RS	wood	woodh	2a	hip	1	1909
Zimmerman's Store	305	Coleridge Ave	CR	M	wood	aluminum	2	gablef	1	1909
	306	Coleridge Ave	RS	RS	wood	brick	2	hip	1	1909
	307	Coleridge Ave	RS	RS	wood	woodh	2	gambrel	1	1909
Llyswn Methodist Episcopal Church	308	Coleridge Ave	EC	EC	wood	brick	1	multi	1	1909
	309	Coleridge Ave	RS	RS	wood	brick+	1a	gables	1	1920
	311	Coleridge Ave	RS	RS	wood	woodh	2a	gablec	1	1909
James E. and Flora Neff Spence House	312	Coleridge Ave	RS	RS	wood	brick+	2a	gables	1	1909
	313	Coleridge Ave	RS	RS	wood	woodh	1a	gables	1	1932
	314	Coleridge Ave	RS	RS	wood	woodh+	2	gambrel	1	1920
	315	Coleridge Ave	RS	RS	wood	woodh+	2	gables	1	1932
	317	Coleridge Ave	rs	rs	wood	brick	2a	hip	1	1920
	318	Coleridge Ave	RS	RS	wood	brick	2	hip	1	1932
	301 -1/2	Coleridge Ave	RS	RS	wood	brick+	1a	gables	1	1932
	105 105A	Coleridge Ave	RS	RS	wood	brick	2a	multi	1	1920

Christopher and Lana Hite House	213	213A Coleridge Ave	RM	RM	wood	vinyl	2a	gablef	2	1909
	204 A	Coleridge Ave	RS	RS	wood	brick+	1a	gables	1	1932
	215 A	Coleridge Ave	RS	RS	wood	brick+	1a	gables	1	1932
	213 B	Coleridge Ave	RS	RS	wood	aluminum	2a	gables	1	1920
Joseph L. and Catherine Kirk House	100	Halleck Place	ER	ER	wood	brick+	2	gablef	1	1920
	101	Halleck Place	RS	RS	wood	woodh	2	gables	1	1920
	102	Halleck Place	RS	RS	wood	brick+	2	hip	1	1932
	103	Halleck Place	RS	RS	wood	brick	1a	gables	1	1932
	104	Halleck Place	RS	RS	wood	woodh	2	gables	1	1920
	105	Halleck Place	RS	RS	wood	woodh	1a	gablef	1	1920
I. Bruce and Mary Stuckey House	106	Halleck Place	RS	RS	wood	brick	2	hip	1	1932
	107	Halleck Place	RS	RM	wood	woodh	2	gablef	1	1932
	108	Halleck Place	RS	RS	wood	vinyl	1	gables	1	1951
	110	Halleck Place	RS	RS	wood	aluminum	1	gables	1	1951
	201	Halleck Place	RS	RS	wood	woodh	1a	gablef	1	1932
	204	Halleck Place	RS	RS		woodh	1	gables	1	9999
	100	Holmes Ave	RS	RS	wood	stucco+	2a	gablef	1	1920
	102	Holmes Ave	RS	RS	wood	stucco+	1a	gambrels	1	1920
	106	Holmes Ave	RS	RS	wood	brick+	1a	gables	1	1932
James M. and Lizzie Skyles House	108	Holmes Ave	RS	RS	wood	woodh	2	gables	1	1920
	206	Holmes Ave	RS	RS	wood	woodh+	2	hip	1	1920
A. W. and Lavinia Rudolph House	210	Holmes Ave	RS	RS	wood	woodh+	1a	gables	1	1920
	100	Logan Blvd	RS	CO	wood	brick	2	hip	1	1909
	104	Logan Blvd	RS	RS	wood	woodh	2	hip	1	1909
Warren R. Weaver House	106	Logan Blvd	RS	RS	wood	woodh	2a	gabled	1	1909
	108	Logan Blvd	RS	RS	wood	woodh	2	hip	1	1909
The Oaks	112	Logan Blvd	RS	RS	wood	woodh	2	gablef	1	1909
	200	Logan Blvd	RS	RS	wood	brick	2	hip	1	1909
	202	Logan Blvd	RS	RS	wood	brick	1a	gables	1	1920
	204	Logan Blvd	RS	RS	wood	woodh	1a	gables	1	1920
Maude Closson Talley House	206	Logan Blvd	RS	RS	wood	brick+	1a	gables	1	1909
Jacob and Ida Brett House	208	Logan Blvd	RS	RS	wood	brick	2a	gables	1	1920
	214	Logan Blvd	RS	RS	wood	woodh	2	gablec	1	1909
	216	Logan Blvd	RS	RS	wood	aluminum	2	hip	1	1909



Llyswen Station (H. Dean Allison Insurance)	218	Logan Blvd	PT	CO	wood	stone+	1a	gables	1	1909
	300	Logan Blvd	RS	RS	wood	woodh	2a	hip	1	1909
Edward H. Bowers House	302	Logan Blvd	RS	RS	wood	brick+	2a	hip	1	1920
	304	Logan Blvd	RS	RS	wood	brick	2b	hip	1	1920
Louis Beezer House	306	Logan Blvd	RS	RS	wood	brick+	2a	gables	1	1909
Michael J. Beezer House	308	Logan Blvd	RS	RS	wood	brick+	2a	gables	1	1909
	310	Logan Blvd	RS	RS	wood	woodh	2a	gablec	1	1909
Howard and Effie Fleck House	312	Logan Blvd	RS	RS	wood	brick	2a	hip	1	1909
	314	Logan Blvd	RS	RS	wood	woodh	2a	hip	1	1909
	400	Logan Blvd	rs	rs	wood	brick	1a	gables	1	1932
Alexander and Mary McLaughlin House	210 -212	Logan Blvd	RM	RM	wood	woodh	2a	gablec	2	1909
	300	Morningside Ave	RS	RS	wood	brick+	2	gables	1	1951
	303	Morningside Ave	RS	RS	wood	vinyl	1	gables	1	9999
	304	Morningside Ave	RS	RS	wood	woodh	1	gables	1	1932
	305	Morningside Ave	RS	RS	wood	brick+	1	multi	1	9999
	306	Morningside Ave	RS	RS	wood	aluminum	1a	multi	1	1932
	308	Morningside Ave	RS	RS	wood	vinyl	2a	gables	1	1932
	309	Morningside Ave	RS	RS	9999	woodh	2	gables	1	9999
	310	Morningside Ave	RS	RS	wood	aluminum	2a	gables	1	1932
	312	Morningside Ave	RS	RS	wood	woodh+	2a	gambrel f	1	1932
	314	Morningside Ave	RS	RS	wood	woodh	1	gables	1	9999
	315	Morningside Ave	RS	RS	wood	aluminum	2	gambrel f	1	1932
	316	Morningside Ave	RS	RS	wood	woodh	2	gable f	1	1932
W. Glenn and Doris Henninger House	317	Morningside Ave	RS	RS	wood	woods	1a	multi	1	9999
Emil A. and Geraldine Engelman House	318	Morningside Ave	RS	RS	wood	woodh	1a	gables	1	1951
Engelman Outbuilding	320	Morningside Ave	CA	MR	wood	woodh+	2	gables	0	1932
	321	Morningside Ave	RS	RS	wood	woodh	1	gables	1	9999
	322	Morningside Ave	RS	RS	wood	stonev+	1	gables	1	1932
	324	Morningside Ave	RS	RS	wood	aluminum	1	gables	1	9999
	325	Morningside Ave	RS	RS	wood	vinyl	1a	gables	1	9999
	326	Morningside Ave	RS	RS	wood	siding	1	gables	1	9999
	110	Penn Circle Drive		RS		aluminum+	1	gables	1	
	111	Penn Circle Drive		RS		brickv	2	gables	1	
	103	Ruskin Drive	RS	RS	wood	asphalt	2	hip	1	1920

	105	Ruskin Drive	RS	RS	wood	woodh+	1a	multi	1	1920
	107	Ruskin Drive	RS	RS	wood	aluminum	2	hip	1	1920
	109	Ruskin Drive	RS	RS	wood	stonev+	1a	hip	1	9999
	111	Ruskin Drive	RS	RS	wood	woodh	2a	gablef	1	1920
	113	Ruskin Drive	RS	RS	wood	aluminum+	2	hip	1	1920
	115	Ruskin Drive	RS	RS	wood	brick	2	hip	1	1920
	201	Ruskin Drive	RS	RS	wood	aluminum	2a	gablef	1	1920
	203	Ruskin Drive	RS	RS	wood	aluminum+	2	hip	1	1920
	205	Ruskin Drive	RS	RS	wood	asbestos	2	hip	1	1920
	207	Ruskin Drive	RS	RS	wood	woodh	2	gables	1	1920
	209	Ruskin Drive	RS	RS	wood	asbestos	1	gables	1	1932
Royal Weidner and Agnes Kane House	211	Ruskin Drive	RS	RS	wood	brick+	2	gambrelf	1	1920
	213	Ruskin Drive	RS	RS	wood	aluminum	1a	gables	1	1951
John C. and Catherine Jackson House	215	Ruskin Drive	RS	RS	wood	brick	2a	gables	1	1920
	217	Ruskin Drive	RS	RS	9999	aluminum	1	gables	1	9999
	221	Ruskin Drive	RS	RS	wood	woodh	2a	gables	1	1920
	300	Ruskin Drive		RS	wood	woodh	1a	multi	1	9999
	303	Ruskin Drive	RS	RS	wood	woodh	2	gables	1	1920
Ward Ave United Presbyterian Church	0	Ward & Coleridge Ave	EC	EC	wood	stone	1b	gablef	1	1909
	108	Whittier Ave	RS	RS	wood	brick	1a	gables	1	1909
	200	Whittier Ave	RS	RS	wood	brick+	1	gables	1	9999
	201	Whittier Ave	RS	RS	wood	brick	1	gablec	1	9999
	202	Whittier Ave	RS	RS	wood	woodh	2	gables	1	1920
	203	Whittier Ave	RS	RS	wood	woodh	2	gables	1	1920
	204	Whittier Ave	RS	RS	wood	asbestos	1	gablef	1	1932
	205	Whittier Ave	RS	RS	wood	vinyl	2a	gables	1	1920
	207	Whittier Ave	RS	RS	wood	brick+	1a	gables	1	1932
Joseph and Emma May Hoover House	203 -1/2	Whittier Ave	RS	RS	wood	woodh	2	gables	1	1920
	206	Whittier Avenue	RS	RS	wood	woodh	1b	shed	1	9999
	100	Wordsworth Ave	RS	RS	wood	woodh	1	gablet	1	1932
	101	Wordsworth Ave	RS	RS	wood	aluminum+	2	gambrelf	1	1932
	103	Wordsworth Ave	RS	RS	wood	asbestos	1a	gables	1	1932
	105	Wordsworth Ave	RS	RS	wood	woodh+	2	gables	1	1932
	106	Wordsworth Ave	RS	RS	wood	woodh+	1a	gables	1	1932
	107	Wordsworth Ave	RS	RS	wood	stucco+	2a	gablec	1	1920

Martin L. Warsing House	108	Wordsworth Ave	RS	RS	wood	woodh+	1a	gambrel f	1	1920
	110	Wordsworth Ave	RS	RS	wood	woodh	1a	gables	1	1932
	111	Wordsworth Ave	RS	RS	wood	woodh	2a	gables	1	1920
	113	Wordsworth Ave	RS	RS	wood	woodh+	2	gablef	1	1932
	114	Wordsworth Ave	RS	RS	wood	woodh	2	gablef	1	1920
	115	Wordsworth Ave	RS	RS	wood	aluminum+	1	multi	1	1920
	119	Wordsworth Ave	RS	RS	wood	aluminum	1	gables	1	9999
	120	Wordsworth Ave	RS	RS	conc.blk.	stucco+	1a	gables	1	1932
	121	Wordsworth Ave	RS	RS		aluminum+	2	gables	1	9999
	124	Wordsworth Ave	RS	RS	9999	brick+	1a	gables	1	9999
	126	Wordsworth Ave	RS	RS	wood	brick	2	gables	1	9999
	128	Wordsworth Ave	RS	RS		brick+	1a	gables	1	9999
	130	Wordsworth Ave	RS	RS	wood	stonev+	1a	gablef	1	1932
Clair R. and Jean Shank House	300	Wordsworth Ave	RS	RS	wood	brick+	1a	gables	1	9999
	303	Wordsworth Ave	RS	RS	wood	vinyl	1	gablef	1	1920
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	311	Wordsworth Ave	RS	RS	wood	aluminum	1a	gablef	1	1932
	312	Wordsworth Ave	RS	RS	wood	woodh+	1a	gables	1	1932
	313	Wordsworth Ave	RS	RS	wood	woodh	1	gables	1	9999
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